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A SOLDIER'S SECRET.

A STORY OF

THE SIOUX WAR OF 1890.

AND

AN ARMY PORTIA.

TWO NOVELS.

BY

CAPT. CHARLES KING, U. S. A.,

AUTHOR OF "THE COLONEL'S DAUGHTER," "THE DESERTER," "DUNRAVEN RANCH," ETC.

PHILADELPHIA:

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TO

ELIZABETH BACON CUSTER,

WHOSE DEVOTION AS WIFE, WHOSE DESOLATION AS WIDOW,

AND

WHOSE BRAVERY AND PATIENCE THROUGH LONG

YEARS "IN THE SHADOW" HAVE

TOUCHED ALL HEARTS,

THIS STORY

IS

Inscribed.

A SOLDIER'S SECRET.

A SOLDIER'S SECRET.

I.

WHEN the Indian summer haze is hovering over the bluffs along the Pawnee in these dreamy, sunshiny afternoons of late November there is a languorous spell even in soldier life, and the troopers love to loll about the wide porches of the barracks during their brief leisure moments, or while waiting the trumpet call for stables. There is scarcely a breath of air astir. The broad, fertile valley under the bluffs, forest-fringed along the stream, gives forth a faint, pungent, smoky odor, and the eye wanders across its soft undulations, its vistas of alternate glade, grove, and shadowy pool, and sees it all as through some filmy, intangible veil. The sharp outlines so characteristic of the frontier at other seasons, giving to the ridge to the northwest that razor-back guise that inspired the original explorers, Kentuckians and Missourians, to refer to the range as "Hawg Buttes," are mellowed into softer curves. There is an echo sprite abroad in the autumn skies, for the distant whistle of the trains, the puff and pant of engines miles away, the rumble of the express as it flies across the wooden truss at Big Bend far down the valley, the lowing of cattle and the tinkle of their bells at the farms beyond the reservation lines, the shout and laughter of village children scouring the stream banks for the last of the year's crop of beech- or butternut, the soft laughter of the ladies gathered in the veranda of the major's quarters, all come floating through the pulseless air to the listening ears of the sentry dawdling here along the post at the western gate, and distracting his attention from the purely military functions which he is called upon to perform. Over at the guard-house many of the men are drowsing in the afternoon sunshine. Among the stables the horses are standing at the picket-line, with drooped heads and lazily-switching tails. The officer of the guard, knowing the colonel to be away on a late shooting-excursion and the

major held at home by the demands of hospitality, has dropped into doze while sitting bolt upright at his wooden desk. Scores of tl garrison proper seem inclined to follow his example, and the tall, darl faced, black-bearded soldier—a handsome fellow—leaning on tl breast-high wall over at the east end midway between the hospital the edge of the bluff and the junior surgeon's quarters, his chin on h arms, his cap pulled well down over his eyes, seems to have bee stricken by the general somnolence. It is only the ladies who are wi awake and alert, for this is Nita Guthrie's last appearance, so to spea She has been paying a brief visit to Dr. and Mrs. Holden, kinsfol of hers, but is to take the East-bound train this very night. Mr Holden goes too, leaving her lord, the junior medical officer of tl station, to the mercy of the other women; and of all the families c some thirty married officers stationed in this big garrison not one unrepresented at Major Berrien's to-day, for Nita Guthrie has won a hearts. But this, say those who have known her long, is an old, o story with Nita; she has been doing the same thing for years.

There is tang of suggestiveness about this statement; moreover, is true: Miss Guthrie is not in the first bloom of youth. "Why, sl must be nearly thirty," say some of the younger girls and young matrons, who envy her none the less the freshness, the grace, the wi someness, that hover about her mobile face; but those who are position to know and have no reason to feel the faintest jealousy asse very positively that Nita is not more than twenty-five.

"Well, why hasn't she married?" is the instant query of Mr Vance, to whose benighted mind it ever appears that because a woma hasn't she cannot.

"Simply because the right man is yet to come," is Mrs. Harper equally prompt reply. "Nita Guthrie has had more offers in six yea than any woman I ever heard of."

"Then there must be something back of it all," responds Mr Vance, whose theories are not to be lightly shaken. "Was there son early affair?"

"My *dear* Mrs. Vance, I have no doubt I could tell you a doz stories, all plausible, all in active circulation when last I visited S Louis and saw her in society there, and all as near the truth, probabl as any we could invent here. Nobody knows but Nita, and she wo tell."

Now as the autumn sun, all red burnished gold, is sinking to tl

horizon on this final day of a charming and memorable visit, Nita Guthrie is bidding adieu with laughing, kindly cordiality to the little coterie gathered in her honor. To one and all she has the same frank, gracious manner. Over all she throws the same odd magnetic spell, seeming to impress each and every one in turn with the same idea: "Now, you are just the most thoroughly delightful creature I have ever met, and I cannot bear to say good-by to you." There is the lingering hand-clasp, and yet not the faintest sentimentality. Nita's blue eyes—very blue—gaze straight into those of her friends. She seems to advance a step or two, as though eager to meet and take by the hand each new-comer. Even the elders among the women find it hard to go; and as for the girls, they linger spell-bound; they cluster about her, watching the sunshine in her face, the play of her features, the sparkle of her eyes, drinking in her winsome words, her rippling laughter.

"It's just the only chance we've had to ourselves, Miss Nita," protests Winifred Berrien. "You've been surrounded by men all the rest of the time, and we couldn't see you now if it weren't that they had to be in stables. Oh, if you only *didn't* have to go to-night!"

"Indeed, Winnie, I don't want to go. It seems to me nothing can be more delightful than life in an army post like this. Certainly no girl ever had a better time anywhere than you have given me here, and it is so unlike what I fancied it might be."

"It is entirely unlike what life on the frontier used to be, Miss Guthrie," answers her hostess, the major's wife, in her calm, placid way. "Any one contrasting our beatitude of to-day with our life here, there, and everywhere over the West during the Indian campaigns in which the regiment was incessantly engaged, can only wonder how we found it possible to exist in those days. Social conditions have changed, too, and in the gathering of our troops in larger garrisons a great many of the unpleasant features of the old life have been eliminated entirely. Indeed, I wish you might stay and see more of us. But you are coming again, are you not?"

"If wishing will bring it about, I shall be with you again with the coming summer or early in the spring. I have promised Mrs. Holden that I will return to her, if only for a fortnight."

The enthusiasm excited among the girls, and apparently shared by all the women present, when this announcement is made, ought certainly to convince Miss Guthrie that they most reluctantly part with her now

and most pleasantly anticipate her future coming. The clamor o: voices is such that for a time no one is conscious of the fact that ou on the parade the regimental line has formed, and that the band i already trooping down the front. Berrien had taken his position a commanding officer. Several subalterns, whose heads were kept rigidl straight to the front, found their eyes wandering furtively over toward the major's quarters. In couples and groups, a number of the ladie come sauntering forth, gathering opposite the centre nearer the colonel' house, from which point they generally watched the closing ceremony o the day. But, still oblivious to any music but that of her voice, a doze of their number hover about Miss Guthrie. Even gun-fire fails t distract their attention. It is not until the major himself returns tossing off his helmet and tugging at his waist-belt, that they realiz that parade is over and dinner waiting.

"Now, you *will* come back next spring?"—"You *will* write?"— "You *won't* forget to send me the photograph,—mind, cabinet size,— Miss Nita?"—"Indeed, if ever I get anywhere near St. Louis you'l be the first soul I shall come in search of."

It is a little flock of enthusiastic army girls surrounding her maidens whose early lives had been spent wandering from river t mountain, from the Gulf to the Columbia, to whom city life wa almost a revelation, and city belles, beings from another world. Win fred Berrien is the leader of the coterie, a girl whose eyes are as dar as Nita's are blue, and they are ready to brim over at this very instan

"Here comes Captain Rolfe for you now, and we've got to let yo go; but we'll all be down to see you off at train-time."

The man who enters at the moment and stands just within th heavy Navajo portière, smilingly looking upon the group and quit unconscious of the almost vengeful glances in the eyes of the youn girls, is a cavalry officer about thirty-five years of age. He is a tal fellow, somewhat heavily built, yet well-proportioned and athleti His face is tanned by long exposure to the sun and wind of the wid frontier. His brown hair, close-cropped, has a suspicion of gray jus silvering the temples. His eyebrows are thick and strongly marked The eyes beneath are deep-set and fringed with heavy lashes. Th moustache, sweeping from his upper lip, is of a lighter brown than hi hair, but equally thick, heavy, and curling. Otherwise his face i smoothly shaved, and is one which impresses those who look upon it *even carelessly,* as strong and resolute. He still wears the double

breasted coat, with shoulder-knots and *fourragère*, just as he had come off parade, though he has exchanged helmet for forage-cap, which latter head-gear at this moment is being dandled in one hand, while the fingers of the other beat a rapid tattoo upon the visor. Comrades of Rolfe would tell you that this is a sign that he is nervous; yet to look at him there, smiling upon the group, quite as though remarking what a pretty picture they make, no one else would be apt to think of such a thing.

"Ready in a moment, Rolfe," shouts the major from an inner room. "You ready, Berengaria?"

"I am always ready, Richard, as you well know," is Mrs. Berrien's placid response. "I think I never kept you waiting so much as a moment."

"Promptest woman in the army or out of it," booms the major from his sanctum, his jovial voice resounding through the rooms of the bright garrison home. "Never knew anything like it, Miss Guthrie. Why, do you know, even when I wasn't half proposing she never let me finish the sentence! 'Twasn't at all what I was going to ask her,—that day, at least. Meant to eventually, of course, if I ever could muster up courage, but this time I had only found grit enough to ask for her picture, and I was engaged in less than ten seconds."

Winnie Berrien rushes from the parlor into the paternal den, voluble with protestation against such scandalous stories at mamma's expense; but Mrs. Berrien, slowly fanning herself, remains calmly seated, as though impervious to these damaging shots, at which everybody else is laughing merrily.

"Possibly you don't believe me," again booms the major, his jolly red face aglow, as he is dragged forth from the den, still struggling with the sleeve-links of his cuff. "Winifred, my child, unhand me. *You'll* never bring your old father's gray hairs in sorrow to the grave by such unwomanly precipitancy, unless it's a civilian with ten thousand a year: will you, dearest?—Miss Guthrie, I never expect to be a rich man. I hadn't as many dollars when I fell in love with Miss De Lancy as I had buttons, and we only wore single-breasted coats in those days, and I was the junior captain. I pledge you my word I never would have had the cheek to offer myself. 'Twas the woman did it. I was going away for a week, and I said, 'You *can* give me one thing, if you will.' I only meant to beg for that picture, and, by Jove! she slipped her hand into mine. I was shaking all over. 'I—

b-beg pardon,' I stammered, 'I was only going to—beg for you p-p-p——' 'My promise?' said Berengaria, sweetly, looking up in my eyes. 'You have it, Richard.' Prompt? Why, she just jumpe at me. Splendid arrangement, though, Miss Guthrie. She furnishe the quarters and all the money, and I the vivacity and beauty of th household, until Winnie came: she contributes a little towards it no But we're a model couple, aren't we, Berengaria?" And the maj bends with playful tenderness, the fun sparkling in his eyes meanwhil and kisses his handsome helpmeet's rosy cheek.

"We have few crosses, certainly," replies Mrs. Berrien, whose ow name is anything but Berengaria, that being, as she is frequent called upon to explain, some of the major's historical nonsense. "W have few crosses, and those, of course, *I* bear. But now," she co tinues, with much decision of manner, "if you are partially restor to sanity we will go, or keep dinner longer waiting.—Miss Guthri do they allow lunatics at large in the streets of St. Louis? Maj Berrien spoke of getting a month's leave this winter and goi thither."

"Oh, send him by all means, and he shall be treated at our ow asylum. Father would rejoice in him,—as I do, Mrs. Berrien."

"And shall I get the colonel to detail Rolfe here to conduct n thither and turn me over to the asylum authorities?" queries th major, with a knowing cock of the head. "Rolfe hates city life as general thing, but he would accept that duty, I fancy."

"Captain Rolfe will be very welcome. Indeed, I only wish y might bring the whole regiment, major. Just think what a good tin the girls could have this winter if that were only possible."

"Berengaria says," bursts in the major again, "that if I only sho you proper attention on this visit you'll be sure to send us invitatio to bring the whole family and spend six weeks at least."

"Father! you outrageous fibber!" gasps Winifred, rushing at hi and placing one slim hand upon his mouth, while twining the othe with its soft white arm, about his neck.—"Indeed, Miss Guthrie, y must be told that father is perpetually poking fun at mother, maki her say all manner of things she never thought of. It is all we enough in the regiment, where people understand it and are prepar for his nonsense, but many strangers are completely deceived at time and mamma never so much as remonstrates."

Evidently mamma does not consider it worth while.

"It would be wasted time, Miss Guthrie, and we are wasting time as it is.—Captain Hazlett will never forgive you, Major Berrien, if you keep dinner waiting another minute.—Captain Rolfe, will you escort Miss Guthrie?—Come, Richard, march!"

"After you, Rolfe," says the major, with a bow of extra ceremony. "After you."

"Before them, if you please, you blind goose!" whispers his better half. "Haven't you sense enough to see he wants to speak with her and that this may be the only opportunity?"

"What! Rolfe wants to talk with her? Why, Miss Guthrie," he booms aloud, "I hadn't the faintest idea——" But here the wife of his bosom lays firm hand upon his sunburnt ear and fairly marches him forth upon the veranda. Miss Guthrie would indeed have been glad to lead, but Rolfe's hand, trembling slightly, as she cannot but note, is laid upon her wrist, restraining her.

"Why didn't you tell me you wanted to talk with Rolfe, Miss Guthrie?" queries the major, over his shoulder, with every appearance of concern. "I could have fixed it all for you."

"Silence, Dick!" sternly murmurs Mrs. Berrien. "There is no fun in this affair, and I warn you—not another word."

Twilight has fallen upon the garrison as they stroll across the parade. The men have vanished from the scene, but the tinkle of guitar and banjo tells where they have gathered. Most of the officers are at dinner. One or two couples are just entering the gateway of Hazlett's quarters,—guests invited to meet the fair visitor on this the last evening of her stay. Dr. and Mrs. Holden can be seen among them, Mrs. Holden gazing somewhat anxiously at Nita and her escort, for it is plain that Rolfe seeks to detain the woman to whom he has paid such unusual and devoted attention ever since the hour of her arrival. Silence and peace have spread their wings abroad, hovering with the twilight over the broad reservation, and the Berriens, walking rapidly now as the energetic lady can lead her expostulating spouse, come suddenly upon the sight of the great golden moon rising above the distant bluffs and peering in upon the garrison through the wide space that interposes between the surgeon's quarters and the barracks at the east end.

"Now, *there* is something Miss Guthrie really must see!" says Berrien, halting short. "As one of her admirers and entertainers, I feel bound to call her attention to it."

"Dick!—stupid!—move on at once. You must not speak to he now. Can't you see?"

"See? Of course I see; and I want her to see: that's why stop." Again half teasingly he attempts to turn, as though bent o looking back. She promptly whirls him about and faces him in th proper direction. "Oh," he persists, "if it is something about he you wanted me to see, can't you understand that I have no eyes in th back of my head, and that therefore I should be allowed to loo about?"

"You see, sir, and understand the situation perfectly well as it i: You're simply bent on mischief. You know that Rolfe has been he shadow all day long, hanging about her to say his say. He knows thi to be his last chance. Everybody will be there the moment dinner : over. Everybody will surround her, and unless he speaks now he mus let her go without a word."

"Berengaria, you amaze me! Are you conniving at his capture Didn't you tell me you knew she wouldn't have him?"

"I did; I know it now; but he is a man who wants to hear his fat from her own lips and plead his cause, too, like a man, unless I am ver much mistaken in him. No, sir, don't you dare look back."

"Poor devil! Why couldn't he wait till after dinner? she migl be in softer mood then. I always am. That's why you always wa till after dinner, I presume, when you have anything special to asl Now, this will take his appetite away entirely."

"As if he had any in the first place! Positively, Richard, you hav no soul above a dinner. When a man is as desperately in love as Rolf do you suppose he cares much what he eats?"

"Well, seems to me I was never off my feed," is Berrien's repl with preternatural gravity, looking straight to the front now and r fusing to meet his wife's dark eyes.

"You!" with fine scorn. "You! Why, Richard Berrien, with a your amiable qualities of heart and weaknesses of head, no one on eart would ever associate you and sentiment in the same breath. Of cours you and your appetite are inseparable; but Rolfe is different: he is lover."

"Well, what am I?"

"You are simply a goose to-night. Come, don't stop at the gat now; push right on into the house after the Holdens. I'll run up t *Mrs. Hazlett's room* with Nita."

A dozen of the fort people, only, have been bidden to dinner, for hardly a dining-room at the post is big enough for more, and on the porch, anxiously awaiting the coming of his guests, is Hazlett.

"Where are Rolfe and Miss Guthrie?" asks he, as men will ask.

"All here now but them."

"Coming at once; only a few steps behind us," promptly answers Mrs. Berrien. "Run in, major: I'll wait for Nita." Berrien looks as though he meditated a mischievous remark, but something in her voice and manner tells him that instant obedience is expected. He gives one quick glance and steps into the hall.

Presently, while chatting with others of the arriving party, he is conscious of the swish of skirts passing up the stairway. The door to the veranda is still open, and, glancing out, Berrien can see Rolfe alone, leaning against one of the wooden pillars, his head drooping as though plunged in deep thought.

"Poor old chap! he's got his *congé* to-night, and that's the end of his two years' romance. Odd about that girl. She fancies nobody."

Three hours later, the moon being well up in the heavens now, and the whole parade shining revealed almost as bright as day, both the verandas and the parlor of Hazlett's cosey home are thronged with officers and ladies, chatting merrily together. The lights are still blazing in the barracks. The trumpeters in full force are grouped about the flag-staff, sounding the last notes of tattoo. The Holdens have borne Miss Guthrie away with them that the ladies might stow their evening gowns in the waiting Saratogas and then don their travelling garb while the quartermaster's big wagon trundles the luggage down to the railway-station. Presently this lumbering vehicle can be seen slowly rolling away from the Holdens' gate, and everybody at Hazlett's waits impatiently for the return of the party. Mrs. Holden is deservedly a favorite in the garrison, and Nita Guthrie, as has been said, has won golden opinions. The evening air is growing chill, however, and of the dozen ladies present only the younger, the girls, remain longer upon the veranda. About this pretty group, laughing and chatting, are four or five of the younger officers, Brewster, "the swell of the subs," keeping close to Winifred Berrien, and claiming more and more of the glances of her big dark eyes. Down at the gate, the moonlight glinting on his polished sabre, the officer of the day is exchanging a few low-toned words with Major Berrien. Rolfe, who, with silent and dogged resolution, had taken his place at Miss Guthrie's side as she

came down the stairs and escorted her to the doctor's, has turned from there and gone slowly across the parade to his own quarters on the other side. Everybody seems to see and know what has happened, and many half-whispered comments are being made, not all in sympathy with the willowed lover. Everybody respects Rolfe, yet among the younger officers are several who feel no warmth of friendship for him, and, as between man and man, garrison girls can only side with the youngsters. Their story of their slight differences is sometimes told again and again; the elders' seldom, for theirs would hardly be believed.

Little by little the chat and laughter subside.

"Oh, why doesn't she come back?" pouts Miss Berrien. "The ambulances will be here in less than half an hour, and we won't see anything of her." A chorus of girlish voices echoes Winifred's views. Mrs. Berrien and Mrs. Parker at this moment come forth from the house and look expectantly up the road.

"How long they are!" says Winnie again. "What can keep them, mamma?"

"Packing, I doubt not, my child."

"But the wagon's gone, trunks and all. It can't be that."

"Still, I would not fret about it, Winnie. Has she not promised to come next spring and pay us a long visit?"

"Yes, but who knows where we may all be next spring, or what may happen meantime? Every paper we get is full of stories of the ghost-dances among the Sioux; and if there *should* be another Indian war——"

"Nonsense, Winifred! Don't think of such a thing! After all this regiment has had to suffer in Indian battle, you don't suppose we, of all others, would be sent from here to a winter campaign in the Northern Department? We've seen the last of such troubles, God be thanked!"

Major Berrien, his interview with the officer of the day ended, has just started to rejoin the group on the veranda, when he hears his wife's pious words. He whirls around sharply.

"Oh, captain, there's one thing I forgot to tell you." And the sabre of the officer of the day clanks against his leg as Captain Porter faces about. The younger officers go on with their blithe chat; but Mrs. Berrien has known her lord twenty long years, and no sooner has the officer of the day departed than she hastens to join him.

"*Dick,*" she falters, "surely you do not believe that there is any

hance of the Twelfth going, even if there should be trouble? Dick, ell me."

"Berengaria, beloved inquisitor," he begins, "I didn't even know here was a row anywhere."

But she rebukes him by a single glance.

"Tell me, Dick," she persists, and clings to his arm. "You don't hink, after all we've been through, that, now that we are so happily ettled here, there is a possibility of such a thing? It isn't only for nyself now. It's—it would mean more to Winifred than either of is dreams of."

He looks at her in silence and amaze. Then—then comes sudden listraction. On the stillness of the night there rises a scream of terror, —a woman's voice uplifted in the expression of an awful shock and gony. Then a dash towards Holden's quarters, every man joining.

"My God!" shouts Berrien, "it's Nita Guthrie."

Following the rush of soldiers' feet, half a dozen ladies, too, have astened, Winifred Berrien foremost of the lot. At the head of the tairs on the landing of the second floor, dressed for her journey, lies he fair guest of the regiment, a senseless heap, with the blood flowing rom underneath her pallid face.

II.

Indian summer was over and done with. The soft haze had gone. For three days the wind had been blowing hard from the northwest, and the air was as clear as an Arizona sky, the distant outlines sharp as the tooth of the prairie blast. Colonel Farquhar had suddenly broken off his shooting-trip, and, without saying why, returned to the post. Captain Rolfe had "cut" the club, once a favorite resort, and was much in Dr. Holden's company,—Holden, who was lonely enough, now that his wife and little ones were gone. Throughout the garrison there was one leading topic for conversation and conjecture,—Miss Guthrie's strange adventure the night of her intended departure, and her equally strange conduct thereafter. She had remained senseless but a few moments. Gentle hands had raised and borne her to the bed in the room she was evidently just about entering when suddenly halted by some mysterious cause. Here, when restored to consciousness, an almost hysterical attack of laughing and weeping had followed upon

her prostration. She insisted on attempting to rise and go to the trai as originally planned, but this Holden positively forbade. He ha succeeded in stanching the flow of the blood from a jagged cut ne the temple, and could suggest ready theory as to the cause thereof,- in falling she had probably struck the edge of the little wooden po at the top of the balusters,—but beyond this explanation there w absolutely nothing. Nita Guthrie would only account for her sudde terror by the half-nervous, half-laughing statement that she thought sl saw a ghost, had played the coward, and turned to run.

But to the trained physician it was evident she had received severe shock. Despite her pleadings, Dr. Holden had refused to allo her to attempt the journey until three days had elapsed, during whic time, though she laughed at him and laughed at herself, her condition co tinued so nervous and excitable that he would not permit visitors to s her. This was pretty hard treatment, thought her many lady friends the post, but he was wise and they could only obey. When the evenir came for the departure, a large contingent, ladies and officers bot assembled to say farewell, and Nita, Mrs. Holden, each of the childre and even the nurse, could have had two or three escorts to the trai But no one had opportunity to say much to the central figure of all th sympathetic interest. Only at the last moment did she appear, a was ushered almost instantly to the waiting carriage by Holden, wl had only summoned her when vigilant eyes had reported the head-ligl of the express visible far up the valley. But then down at the da platform of the station faithful, sad-faced Rolfe was waiting, and in t minute or two that intervened before the huge train came glaring, his ing, and thundering alongside he managed to have a word or two wi her. Mrs. Vance, had she been present, might have vowed that Ni shrank and clung to Holden's arm, but others who were there saw h extend her gloved hand cordially, saw that Rolfe clung to it an instan —charitable others who could only wave adieu, for the party was hu ried aboard, and away went the express, the tail-lights of the re sleeper disappearing in the dripping gloom around the bend, for, though in sympathy with the mourning of the post, a drizzling ra had begun to fall just after retreat. Rolfe, gazing after them to t last, wore that look seen on the face of many another man ma another time. There can be few sensations more dismal than that watching the disappearing lights of the train that bears away on *best beloved, especially* in the eyes of him who stands rejected.

"Let me drive you home, Rolfe," said Holden, kindly. "Two of a kind," was his mental addition. And Rolfe turned slowly away, neither man saying another word until once more they stood at the gate of the now deserted home.

"Come in and have a pipe."

"Thanks, not—now, doctor." A long, wistful pause, then—"Well, good-night."

"Good-night, old man. Come when you will; I'll be lonely now." And the doctor stood and gazed after him long and earnestly as the captain strode into the darkness out over the parade.

Within the days that followed, when he had leisure to think it all over, Holden felt his perplexities increase. Up to the very last Nita had persisted in her statement that nothing had happened to warrant the absurd exhibition she had made of herself. "I was overwrought, nervous, unstrung," she said. "I had not been feeling quite well. I had run up to the room for my gloves, which I had left upon the table. I had not reached the door, and it was just the waving of those white curtains in the draught from the side window. I must have thought I saw a ghost, and, like a fool, I screamed and tripped, and—*voilà tout.*"

But Holden had known her for six years, and felt well assured she was not of the stuff that is easily stricken with terror. With every confidence in her veracity in general, he did not in the least believe her now. The more he studied the matter the more he felt that she was hiding something from them one and all, even from Jennie, whom she dearly loved and whom ordinarily she frankly trusted. It was evident that Jennie, too, believed, as did her husband, the doctor, that there was something behind it all. But Jennie was gone, and, except possibly Rolfe, there was no one to aid him in his search after the truth. Rolfe's heart was now so shrouded in its own gloom that any phase of tragedy seemed credible. Rolfe evidently wanted to know Holden's suspicions or surmises, and again and again led up to the subject; but of all men in the garrison, much as he esteemed him, Rolfe seemed hardly the man to make a confidant of now. Was he not Nita's avowed though rejected lover?

Of course no time had been lost in making investigation on the night of the occurrence. Even while the doctor and others were raising the unconscious girl from the floor, half a dozen officers were scouring the premises for signs of intruder, and had found absolutely nothing. The room *occupied* by Miss Guthrie in the doctor's house

was immediately to the left at the head of the stairs. The hall wa broad, the landing roomy. It was one of the oldest sets of quarters a the post, and an oddity in its way. Entering the door of the rea room on the east, three windows appeared, two opening at the bac and one at the side. The two at the back looked out over the roof o the rear porch. It was perfectly practicable for any one with a ladde to have clambered to this roof, and, had the blinds been open, peere in the windows at the occupant. But there was no ladder. Wha was more, the blinds were tight shut and bolted on the inside. Th shades within were drawn down, and the lace curtains looped over eac Between them stood a long old-fashioned mirror above the toilet-tabl draped with lace curtains very much as were the windows themselve No one from without could have been visible to any one within. N one within could have been seen by any one without. Moreover, th Holdens' cook—an indomitable Irishwoman—was on the back porc at the moment of Miss Guthrie's fright, saying good-night to Corpor Murphy, who had long been Kathleen's devoted admirer, and bot stood ready to swear that nobody was on that roof. The rear windov thus disposed of, the doctor had turned his attention to the window a the side, and here there was possibility of explanation.

As has been said, the Holdens' house was one of the oldest at th old frontier fort, but so solidly and substantially had it been built tha when others were condemned and ordered replaced along the row, th authorities had decided to retain "Bayard Hall." It was originally double set, with hall-way in common, intended for the use of fou bachelor officers, each to have his two rooms, there being four roon on the first and four on the second floor, while the kitchen an servants' rooms were placed in a wooden addition at the rear. Th ground fell away rapidly from the front piazza, so that while the firs floor front was but a few steps higher than the walk, the rear por was a full story above the ground, giving abundant space for stor rooms, etc., under that part of the house, and necessitating a flight of dozen steps to reach the porch or the kitchen door-way. Around th front and sides of the second story there ran originally a broad galler but this was before the days of the war of the rebellion, during whi the post was little used, and when, after certain repairs and alteration the house was declared assignable as family quarters, the old wood gallery had been condemned and torn down. Nevertheless, the bean which were its support on the east were found solid and firm. The

ected through the wall of rough-hewn stone, and an old-time quar-
naster, selecting the house for his own use, had thrown a light gallery
upon them. It made such a convenient place for flower-pots,
ıbs, bath-tubs, and things of that description, said he. Further-
re, it was a place where he could go in the warm evenings and smoke
sip his toddy with his chosen associates, and not have every garri-
gabbler crowding in to disturb their chat and absorb his precious
nongahela. The gallery had no roof, was only five feet wide, and
ı inaccessible except through this one window, which the unsociable
jor had had cut down level with the floor. "Robbers' Roost" the
lainful subalterns used to call it in the days when bluff old Blitz
l occupied the quarters and barred out all but his chums, and by the
ıe name was it known when Holden moved in with his wife and
re-branches and took up his abode there a few years before the open-
of this story. When the Eleventh marched out and the Twelfth
ıe in, Colonel Farquhar, finding the doctor in possession, decided
ıt the Holdens should not be disturbed,—that there was abundant
ım for others in the new quarters. The Holdens entertained a great
ıl. Pleasant people were visiting them month after month, and
erybody in the Twelfth blessed them for the brightness and gayety
ir presence lent to the garrison. A sterling fellow was Holden, one
the best men in one of the very best corps, personally and profes-
ınally, in our little army; and as for his wife, an accomplished society
ıman, a St. Louis belle, still in the heyday of youthful womanhood,
erybody in the garrison delighted in her friendship and kindliness.
ıere was no more popular parlor than Holdens', and night after night
e young officers gathered there. But "Robbers' Roost" had fallen
o disuse. The glass door was generally shut, and the venetian blinds
th which old Blitz had decorated it were ordinarily closed except
ıen this, one of their two guest-chambers, was occupied. Shades and
e curtains similar to those at the rear windows draped it within, so
ıt from the interior this side door presented almost the same appear-
ce as the windows themselves, and it stood directly opposite the hall
or. But Miss Guthrie had become enthusiastic over the lovely view
wn the Pawnee Valley from that side gallery. She was frequently
be seen there. She had gone out for one farewell look as the valley
flooded in the light of the full moon, and this was immediately
er changing her dress. She was exclaiming over its beauty as,
ıyed for her journey, she came dancing down the stairs to join her

hostess and the excited children in the parlor. She suddenly missed her gloves, remembered that she had left them in her room, had scurried up the stairs, had reached the landing at the top, but never entered her room at all, when there was heard that awful shriek of terror and heavy fall. Holden at the instant was in his own room, the rear room on the opposite side of the house, and was changing his best uniform into something more suitable for a run down to the railway. This had delayed him a second or two, so that Brewster and Randolph, two of the most active of the junior officers, were foremost at his heels as he flew up the stairs. His first care was for Nita, but the youngsters had bounded into the room and out on the gallery, as though expecting to overtake some intruder there. The side door was wide open, the shade up, the lace curtains drawn apart. If any one had been in the room escape to the gallery was easy enough, but from there there was practically none except by a leap of fifteen or twenty feet to the hard ground below. No one had run out, either front or back, for Murphy and the Irish cook were at the rear on the east side, the rushing swarm of officers at the front. If any one had hidden there, escape unobserved was well-nigh impossible. No one was found,—no trace of any one. Indeed, when Nita was permitted to talk she vowed that no one had been there. She herself had left the blinds, door, and curtains open as she came in from the moon-lit gallery, had turned out her lamp and descended the stairs. The gallery door-way could not be seen from where she fell, and, as all was darkness in the room itself, how could she have seen any one?

Out on the gallery, of course, any one would have been revealed thanks to the brilliancy of the full moon, almost as in the broad glare of day; but one had to be at the hall door or in the square room itself in order to see the gallery at all, and Nita declared, as before, that she had not reached the door. What she fancied was a ghost, bathed in pale, cold light, was probably the white curtains of the rear windows. But the light,—whence came that?

The possibility of any one having been in the room was not entertained. Prompt and thorough search had been made in every nook and corner of the upper story. The rooms of the nurse and children were on the westward side of the hall, and the nurse was in one of them, putting on her hat, at the very moment. The front room of the east was unoccupied. Nita had chosen the other because of the gallery and its lovely view. Then there was the rear slope of the mai

roof above the gallery. That, thought Holden, might have offered a way of escape, because it was out of sight from the parade. But Brewster and Randolph had both essayed to reach the eaves, and, even when standing on the railing, could barely touch them with the tips of their fingers. Then, again, a sentry walked along the edge of the slope leading to the river-bottom south of the long row of officers' quarters and close behind the rear fence, but he was at the eventful moment well down the row beyond Hazlett's house, whereas Dr. Holden's was at the eastern end of the line. The moon shone full against the back fence, said the sentry, and he was sure he would have seen anybody who ran out of the gate of the doctor's yard, and the first who appeared were the searching officers, Corporal Murphy with them. Several men had then come running from the direction of the laundresses' quarters to the west, and after them Sergeant Ellis. Indeed, it was Ellis who first suggested a search of the roof by means of a ladder. He was sergeant in charge of the fire-apparatus kept in that long, low building at the east end, and had the keys of the door. It was by his aid that some of the junior officers made a thorough examination of the roof and the front porch. No more signs there than had hitherto been found. No, the sentry on the south post was confident that no man came out of Holden's yard until he got to the gate, whither he had run the instant he heard the cry. He thought it might be a lamp-explosion or a fire, and he was watching with eager eyes. He had been on post nearly two hours when the alarm came, and, except Corporal Murphy and the quartermaster's men who took the trunks, he had not seen or heard a man about the premises. Kathleen, the nurse-maid, and the children had been home all the evening, and they had neither seen nor heard anybody.

Captain Rolfe, unable to sleep, and making the rounds on his own account about one o'clock, found the sentry of the third relief gazing curiously in at the open back gate, and questioned him as to what excited his attention.

"Nothing, sir," was the prompt reply of the trooper, as he threw his carbine to the position of "arms port." "I was simply wondering how any man could have ventured in there this bright night and expected to get out unseen, especially early in the evening, when men are passing to and fro all the time."

"What made you think any one had been there?" asked the captain, quietly.

"Everybody has heard by this time that there was a search made, and that the young lady had seen something to frighten her. Besides, Sergeant Ellis spoke of it to me an hour ago."

"What was the sergeant doing on your post at midnight?"

"Why, sir, the captain remembers Sergeant Ellis is in charge of the fire-house and sleeps there. He came out a little before twelve and said he'd lost his pet pipe while he was hunting around with Lieutenant Brewster after he brought the ladder, and I let him pass in, sir. He said he'd been working there long after taps, and it would be all right. He found the pipe, sir, right at the edge of the wood-pile yonder. He showed it to me as he came out."

Captain Rolfe was silent a moment. Ordinarily none of the enlisted men had any right to be away from quarters after the "lights out" signal, but this case was unusual. Furthermore, Ellis was a man superior in intelligence, a sergeant of more than a year's standing, and one who had been selected for this especial duty for the very reason that, holding himself much aloof from the average run of the rank and file, he would be apt to attend strictly to his duties as custodian of the fire-house, and no one had ever heard of his abusing his trust. His own little room was a model of neatness when the commanding officer made his monthly inspection of the garrison, and the hose-carriage, the hook-and-ladder truck, the fire-buckets, and other apparatus were always in perfect order and readiness for service. No one ever inspected Ellis's quarters at any other time. The guard often noticed his light after midnight, and he had the reputation of being a good deal of a reader and student, taking books from the post library very often, besides owning quite a number of his own. Observant officers who had glanced about when making the inspection with Colonel Farquhar noted that many of these were texts on mining, mining engineering, mineralogy, and geology, and some had gone so far as to question the sergeant as to whether he had ever practically essayed mining. With perfectly respectful manner Ellis replied to these occasional queries, merely saying, "Yes, sir, but without success." Asked where he had made his essay, his reply was rather vague: "In several Western States and Territories, sir,—mainly Arizona and Colorado." Only once had he displayed anything like annoyance or impatience under such fire. He had served his three years' enlistment, was entitled to his discharge, yet quietly notified his troop commander that he proposed to re-enlist. In a somewhat sharp manner that official had whirled about.

"Sergeant Ellis," said he, "if I had had your experience in ining it seems to me I'd find something different from staying in the egular army."

"Captain Gorham," was the unexpected reply, "if you had had nything like my experience you would be very glad of a berth in the rmy or out of it,—preferably in."

It was conceded after this episode that Ellis had a history and the culty of keeping it to himself. The colonel was glad to have him e-enlist, even while wondering that he should do so. Many remem-ered how he had come to them haggard and travel-worn three years efore and offered himself as a recruit. This was far out in the moun-ains. His language and manners were such that every one knew it to e a case of a man whom fortune had betrayed, and who "took the hilling," as many another has done, somewhat as a last resort. But efore he had won his first chevrons the men knew well that from some ource or other Ellis was beginning to receive a good deal of money. When Sergeant Currie was killed by that tough in the public streets f Sheridan City,—a cold-blooded and uprovoked murder,—and Cur-ie's wife and children had not where to lay their heads now that their upport was gone, officers and men "chipped in" and bought them a ittle cottage on the banks of Rapid Run, just at the edge of town. Ellis had planked down a five-dollar bill as his share on the subscrip-ion-list, but did not Kate Currie, the eldest child, tell how he had ome all by himself afterwards and given her an envelope which he bade er hand to mother from a friend,—an envelope which was found to old a fifty-dollar Treasury note? Sporting characters in the regiment who sought to borrow from Ellis met with cold, even curt, refusal. Neither would he ever gamble or bet with them. Neither did he seem to care to go to town at all when first the regiment moved into this its ost delightful station after years of service on the distant frontier,—ot until the order was issued permitting meritorious soldiers to wear ivilian dress when on pass. Then he was almost the first to appear n the streets of the bustling county seat, in a neat, unobtrusive, but emarkably well cut and well fitting suit, and, far better dressed than ost of the townspeople, Sergeant Ellis became an occasional visitor; ut no one ever heard of his patronizing any other establishments than e bank, the post- and express-offices, and the book-stores. Captain azlett, calling at the post-office one day, was surprised to find Ellis t a lock-box, the key of which he calmly placed in his waistcoat-

pocket and then as calmly raised his hat in salutation to his superi officer. Both were in civilian dress, both on temporary leave of a f hours only, both, from the point of view of the correspondent of very enterprising paper, occupied at the moment the same social plan and his allusions to "the slavish deference demanded by the aristo cratic commissioned force of their enlisted but far worthier men" gav rise to some discussion at the fort. One or two officers held that Ell should have given the military salute and no other, but the mass o opinion was in favor of Ellis's action: being entirely in civilian dre himself, the civilian custom should prevail.

"Well, damn it," said Mr. Randolph, "that consists out here i shoving one's hands deeper into pockets, tilting the cigar higher in th mouth, and giving just half a nod." It was finally conceded, howeve that in courteously raising his hat Sergeant Ellis had done about th right thing, and that in as punctiliously raising his own in recognitio the captain had fittingly and scrupulously acknowledged the courte the sneers and lashings of *The Spasm City Chimes* to the contrary no withstanding.

Still, no one supposed that Ellis was going to re-enlist when h time expired. They had already begun casting about for somebo else to place in charge of the fire-house. But Ellis signed the pape with ready hand, asked for and got a month's furlough with permi sion to leave the department, and was back in two weeks ready t resume duty, his dark face a trifle paler, his heavy beard becoming trimmed, just three days after Nita Guthrie's arrival, just three da before she was to have gone home.

Rolfe turned from the sentry and gazed away eastward. Ho many a long mile down that beautiful valley were the lights of th rushing train by this time, and what meant this light so close at hand shining faintly but clearly through the slowly plashing rain? Afte one, and the sergeant still up and reading? No, it burned too dimly for a student-lamp; neither was it in the sergeant's room. Following his thoughts, Rolfe, wrapped in his mackintosh, moved slowly ou to the eastern edge of the bold bluff, passing the fire-house on his way A breast-high wall of rough stone ran diagonally over towards wh was left of the old block-house, once perched on the brow of the cli and, as the captain reached the point of the bluff, he became aware o a dim figure standing silent and motionless between him and the south ern face of the antiquated work. Another man whose thoughts wer

wing the eastward windings of that misty valley, was it not? ther keeping sleepless vigil?

"Who's that?" in low tone, he suddenly hailed. A start, a quick , then prompt advance and answer:

"Sergeant Ellis, sir."

The deep collar of his overcoat was turned up about his ears, so the face was well-nigh hidden, but the voice was calm and firm.

"You keep late hours, sergeant."

"Not without warrant, captain."

"Your warrant might suffer, sir, if the colonel knew you had lights two o'clock."

"It is by his authority, sir, that one lantern burns all night; that he one the captain sees."

Rolfe paused, baffled.

"Then I believe I will light a cigar at your lantern," he finally d, and, turning, he moved away towards the low wooden building hind him. Ellis promptly followed, then sprang ahead and opened e door for his superior's entrance.

"Let me offer the captain a match: that is an oil lantern." And, iking a lucifer on the strip of sandpaper, he held it forth. Rolfe issed the flame with the end of his weed. Light came to him, but t to his cigar. Muffled though his face remained in the depths of at cavalry collar, Sergeant Ellis's lips and chin were visible through e opening in the front and in the glare of the little match.

"When did you shave off your beard, sergeant? I should hardly ve known you."

The lips trembled, but the dark eyes, the deep voice, were steady ever:

"Last evening, sir."

III.

The northwest winds that had finally banked up the southern ouds and squeezed down a dismal drizzle the night of Miss Guthrie's eparture now veered and whisked away the moist and plashing veil, id the afternoon sunshine of the day that followed streamed across ie broad *mesa* in a flood of grateful warmth and radiance. The olonel ordered out the entire command, to the utter consternation of Miss Winifred Berrien and the supreme disgust of some half a dozen

junior officers, who, counting on the weather indications at nine A.M. had eagerly accepted Mrs. Berrier's suggestion that they spend their rainy afternoon at the major's hospitable quarters, by way of making it pleasant for two young damsels from town and three or four from the fort itself, all of whom were supposed to be deeply interested and engaged in the embroidery of certain altar-cloths, lecturn and pulpit adornments, with which it rejoice the eyes of their amiable chaplain at Christmas-tide. Here it was well along in November, and, beyond a vast amount of chatter and conjecture over the prospective pleasure of the reverend dominie, nothing had been done.

True, the colonel had astonished everybody by ordering out the entire regiment, at least the eight companies thereof present at the post, to parade for inspection and review, equipped for field-service, at nine [illegible] that morning and [illegible] recalled the order when the persistent [illegible] of the rain warned him that it would take a day or two or [illegible] the clothing and equipments subjected to such a [illegible]. And then if anything should happen and they should be suddenly [illegible] everything right into the waiting train —— [illegible] the idea could not be entertained. Of course matters were looking squally, very squally, up there in the Dakotas, and everybody from the Missouri to the mountains and north of the Platte was already out in the field, and, in little detachments from the scattered posts even far away in Montana, even far in southern Wyoming, the soldiery were converging towards those swarming agencies where thousands of truculent warriors of the great Dakota nation were drawing rations for every man, woman, child, and pappoose they possessed. Be it known to the reader that paternalism is rampant in the land,—that while peace societies and Indian rights associations and prayerful congregations away at the Atlantic seaboard are deluging the press with diatribes upon the wrongs of the red man and the criminal neglect of the nation, and declaring that

> Man's inhumanity to Lo
> Makes countless Indians mourn.

in this last "century of dishonor" Uncle Sam has disbursed millions upon millions in the desperately hopeless task of filling the aboriginal stomach, and in striving by means of honest census to reduce the number of the "countless" so pathetically referred to. Indians would

ake splendid ward politicians, and how it is that the sachems of ammany have not long since possessed themselves of so available a eans of swelling their ranks passeth all understanding. After the ndian had had himself, several wives, and his blooming olive-anches, "oksheelah, wicincha," boys and girls, and such pappooses as is better halves had at the back (either of home production or bor-owed for the moment from the tepee of Two-Bricks-in-his-Hat), duly umerated, would he not swell the census of his tribe by judicious istribution of all his wives' relations among those tepees not already ecked off? Oh, if the truth could ever reach the ears of the general ublic, what tales of Indian sagacity might not yet be in store for em! What annals might not be unfolded! Dealing with his own, is white children, who are non-voters, Uncle Sam serves out one tion a day to each enlisted soldier. The wife, and the lads and lasses at tumbled about the married men's quarters in the queer old days, ere all to be fed from that one ration, unless, perchance, mamma was laundress. But when dealing with the wronged and injured red an he could not be too magnanimous. Every head counted. The umbling old beldame, great-grandmother of "countless thousands," raced up from the edge of the grave for the occasion. The big-bellied ttle four-year-olds, revelling in the dirt about the reeking shambles, he tiny, hour-old pappoose, even many a puppy, blanket-swathed and lung squaw-back, passing for a wee baby,—anything he could show s possessing a spark of Indian life was duly credited to the warrior ord of the lodge for another ration,—a full one. Cattle might and id shrink, but to the Indian there is more meat in a lean cow than in he stall-fed ox to the white, for the reason that "everything goes." Horns and hoofs are the only things the Indian doesn't eat. Agents night and did cheat and steal, but so did the Indian, and many a ejoicing old sinner has been credited with a family of twelve when is sole available domestic assets consisted of two squaws and three hildren, the pappooses having been borrowed, or personated by undled-up doggies, the grandmother being public property, passed round for the occasion; the others, pickaninnies painted so as to look ntirely unlike the grinning urchins counted in the flock of brother ab-in-the-Dark whose people had just been enumerated. There were ents who lent themselves to that sort of thing because the more ndians they could show as their especial wards, the more barrels and xes and bales were invoiced to that agency and deftly "raked off"

en route. There was a time when the man who wouldn't make hay when such a sun shone was looked upon as an unprofitable servant who couldn't contribute to campaign funds. "What the devil do you suppose we had you made agent 'way up at Gallatin for?" asked an irate political "boss" of a deposed and crestfallen late-incumbent who came home superseded.

"Why, it was you and our Congressman who exposed the stealings of my predecessor and had him fired. I supposed you wouldn't stand that sort of thing. I supposed you wanted me to be perfectly honest."

"Of course we did; but, damn it, you don't seem to understand: he was paying to the other party."

But railways and telegraphs have brought all this, or much of it, within range, so to speak. Things are changed, except perhaps human nature, white or Indian. There has been failure to provide for carrying out the earnest recommendations of the best friend the Indian has known for years,—the man whose word was his bond, whom they feared in war and loved and trusted in peace. There has been shrinkage both in the cattle and the count. No matter how much beef might shrivel on the hoof in the old days, the Sioux, if he were at all sharp, got more than was his share; and most of the Sioux were sharp as their knives. Other tribes might have starved and suffered, but not they. With the new order of things came full stomachs for hosts of other aborigines, but fault-finding for these Dakotas. No more "tepee counts;" on the contrary, heads of families paraded their entire force, and, while enumerators with book and pencil went along the front of the line, Uncle Sam's blue-coats on the border keenly watched the rear, and put sudden stop to all sham or swapping. Now the shrinkage came to be privation, and, turning in appeal to the generals who headed the great commission and won their faith, appealing to Crook for the remedies Congress had utterly failed to provide, their hearts were bowed with the tidings that the Great Spirit had summoned the "Gray Fox" to happier hunting-grounds.

Then was there no other appeal? One,—one which had never failed to wring from the government the concession desired. Old chiefs might plead in vain, but the blood of the young warriors is hot and strong, the lust for reputation as vehement as of yore. Every brave stood ripe for action, and no Indian leader ever equalled in craft in cunning, in adroitness, the scowling old sinner Sitting Bull, and no *man need doubt* that it was he who gave the cue. Every medicine

man in the Dakota nation began to preach the coming of the Messiah, but the Messiah craze was only the means to an end. Un-koi-to, the Indian Redeemer,—he who ordained that his children should prepare themselves by the savage rites of the ghost-dance to meet him and all their dead ancestry and with them wipe the pale-face from the land,—Un-koi-to was a fraud of the first water, a masquerading scamp of a white man at odds with his own kind, and progressive Indians knew it. But even to such a saviour, when urged by the charlatans in every village, the superstitious nature of the red man turned in eager adulation, and the ghastly, maddening dance went on. Night after night all over the broad Northwest the skies were aglow with the Indian fires. The vault of the heavens echoed to the sound of frenzied shriek and yell and the furious beat of the Indian drum. It is but a step from the ghost-dance to the scalp-dance,—from Indian worship to Indian war. A year ago, in every valley of beautiful South Dakota cattle were browsing on the bunch-grass, settlers ploughing on the plains, women sewing and singing under the new-raised roof-trees, and gleeful children playing in the golden heaps of corn. Now the plough stands idle in the abandoned furrow; the cattle have gone, to make up, presumably, for the reservation shrinkage; women's songs have changed to sobs, children's laughter hushed to terrified silence, as the settlers seek the refuge of the towns. New red glare in the sky at night, and the new ranch-house lights the way of many a savage warrior, bound with arms and ponies to swell the hostile ranks in the mazes of the Bad Lands.

"God only knows how soon it may come," read Farquhar, but a week before, "but I think you would better be with your command." Farquhar relinquished his shooting-trip and at once got him home. He could not bear to tell his people, in the happiest garrison the regiment had ever known, that perhaps it might be as well to drop the plans for the cavalry ball and the Christmas theatricals, the cherished projects for the coming holidays. He hated to have any one ask him if he thought there were not just a chance—just a chance—of their being ordered up there. But even before he left he and Berrien had been talking the matter over. The idea was to always have the regiment ready for anything, and it did seem as though with all the summer and fall marching and scouting and manœuvring in the field they were, as the Englishmen would say, "pretty fit." Fit, certainly, for any amount of scouting or fighting on the southern plains, and yet

utterly unprepared for the rigors of a Dakota winter. Any colonel who, serving in Arizona or in the Indian Territory, were to apply for canvas overcoats, blanket-lined, for fur caps, gloves, boots, leggings, etc., intended only for service in the high latitudes, would have been laughed at, if not snubbed. Farquhar decided it best not to let any of the women worry over a possibility. No use borrowing trouble, he said. Long years had the regiment served in that wintry land. Fierce and incessant had been its campaigns against the Indians. Dire had been its sufferings and losses. Only recently—only within the year—had they reached this paradise, with its hazy landscape, its lovely peaceful homes, its kindliness and greeting yet warm in remembrance, the edge of its cheer still new and unworn.

And then Kenyon came back from leave, a burly major of foot who had been visiting at his old home in Chicago, and was reported to be wearing the willow for a girl who had but just married a mere junior first lieutenant in the Eleventh, their predecessors along this line. It might be that Kenyon was cross and crabbed. The youngsters called him "grumbly" at first acquaintance. It might be that he was so hipped and unhappy himself he could not bear to see the bliss and content on every face about him. He and Rolfe were congenial spirits, said the boys, for "both of them got left." But Kenyon, close-mouthed as he was at times, had watched things a day or two, and then had given Farquhar a "pointer." He had heard something, he said, at division head-quarters. Hence the order for "turn out everybody, field-kits and fifty rounds."

The maddest man at mess at one-thirty was Mr. Carroll Brewster,—"Curly B" his comrades called him in the years gone by, when he had much kink to the blond hair of his handsome head and not a vestige thereof to the down on his lip. Now, as first lieutenant of the "Black Troop," with a moustache all bristle and curl, and with a pate whereon the curls were cropped to regulation lines, he was a very different sort of fellow. All the morning long he had sat on a garrison court, where as "swing member" he had not enough to do to keep him from brooding over his woes. He had counted on spending the hours from two until stables basking in the light of those wonderful, deep, dark eyes of Miss Winifred Berrien. Somewhat petted and spoiled in his earlier years of service, Brewster had had much of the nonsense knocked out of him in the harsh experiences of seven years in the saddle with a regiment renowned for its touch-and-go sort of

work. He had steadied greatly in those years, part of the process being due to his own latent good sense, and not a little thereof to incessant striving on the range to win high honors as a sharp-shooter, and to-day there was not a finer-looking soldier wearing the broad yellow stripes in the Twelfth than this same ex-dandy "Curly Brewster." There still lingered about him a certain repute for self-consciousness, if not for actual conceit, but he had grown to be thoroughly respected in the regiment, and was vastly popular with the men. He was ever ready to umpire their matches at base-ball, coach their shooting, lend his own fishing-tackle or shot-guns to longing sportsmen in the ranks who had none of their own, and he had won the lasting gratitude of C troop, two of whose men were being mobbed by a gang of toughs one windy night in Sheridan City just as Curly came trotting back *en route* to the post. "He was off his horse and into that crowd quicker than winking," said Murphy, "and the way he laid over that gang with them white fists of his just made my sides crack with delight." He had more sense than they gave him credit for, said the seniors of the regiment, after a while, and, barring an early experience, a cadet love-affair that he was long ago well over, had never let himself go again,—never until the Twelfth came to settle in this happy valley and Winifred Berrien returned from her Eastern school. Then he went all of a sudden. Only one man did not see it: that was Berrien. Only one woman couldn't forgive him his devotion; and she had no business interfering, being herself otherwise disposed of. To his credit be it said, Brewster and the lady's husband were about the only men who appeared unaware of this autumnal infatuation. Nevertheless, in those numberless ways in which women can claim and secure the appearance, at least, of attention from men, the dame had managed to monopolize considerable of his spare time up to the week of Miss Berrien's coming, after which it was not he who rode to town, but she who drove out to the post and sent for him to come and talk to her as she leaned back in her stylish victoria and looked up at him from under her tinted lashes. She could have found it in her heart to strangle the lovely girl so darkly, richly beautiful, but her call upon "the ladies" had been returned when she was conspicuously absent from home, and opportunities for meeting were not afforded by the damsel's parents. There were girls at the post who were quick to see how "Antinoüs" had lost his heart; but these, those at least who were near enough to Winifred to dare

allude to the matter at all, were content to archly quote the warning,—

> Change the name and not the letter,
> Marry for worse and not for better.

There was one man with whom Brewster was at odds, a sentiment due to an old difference when both were younger, and that was Rolfe. There was one man the gallant major especially liked and swore by, and that was Rolfe. These facts, added to the coincidence that the captain had never forgotten the hot words used by his second lieutenant long years before, made a combination most unfortunate for a fellow so much in love as was Carroll Brewster.

On this particular morning he had striven to hurry matters through on the court,—to try three or four cases where the accused were only too ready to plead guilty and "throw themselves on the mercy," etc., and then adjourn on the specious plea of giving the judge-advocate time to write up the proceedings. But the president of the tribunal had other views, and held him. Brewster knew that Randolph and Hunt and Ridgeway, perhaps others, had taken advantage of the weather and no drill to slip over to Berrien's for a blithe morning hour with the girls. He could imagine that pretty parlor, with its pictures and piano, its attractive curtains and portières, the group of bright, sweet faces, the animated chat, Winifred herself, in her dark, rich beauty, seated at the piano, with Ridgeway hanging over her, eager to turn the leaves, eager to do anything that might keep him at her side. Confound the fellow! he had money and a handsome old family homestead. What business had he roughing it in the cavalry, with no end of chances of getting his head knocked off, when his doting mother was so eager to have him come home, marry, settle down, and take up the management of the property his father had left him two years before? Poor "Curly"! he could only gaze wistfully out across the dripping parade from his seat in the dark court-room and watch the glinting of the firelight on the Berriens' parlor window. The major loved a broad fireplace and a hickory blaze, and here he had them to his heart's content for the first time in full twenty years of army wanderings. How must that firelight enhance the cosiness and comfort of the scene within! How must it be flickering about the dark masses of her lustrous hair at this very moment! How——

"*How* do you vote, Brewster? Are your wits wool-gathering?"

He pulled himself together as best he could; but that was a morning of torment.

And now to think that, after all, he could have no moment at her side this day! To think that Farquhar should have ordered them out for hours of pottering around at saddle-bags, nose-bags, side-lines, lariats, picket-pins, and all that sort of truck! It was simply barbarous. He curbed his tongue as well as he knew how, for plainly he saw that his chums were mischievously exulting over him, but any one who knew Brewster could see his wrath and discomfiture. The announcement was made just before luncheon was over. The adjutant came bolting in with the order, and shutting his ears to the chorus of expletives.

"What time did you say boots and saddles would sound?" fiercely demanded Randolph.

"In a quarter of an hour: so you've no time to lose saying swear-words or asking damfool questions.—And as for you, Curly, you're for guard to-morrow."

Brewster finished his cup of tea in an undignified gulp, quitting the table and the room in three strides. There was just time to scurry over to Berrien's and see her for five minutes before he had to jump back to his quarters and into riding-boots, etc. Any pretext would answer,—the dance to-night, for instance.

"Get my field-rig ready at once, and bring my horse up here in ten minutes," he called to his servant, slashed at his natty uniform with a whisk broom, and bounded out of the door, only to encounter the man of all others he least cared to see coming in.

"Were you just going, Brewster? There is a matter I want very much to ask you about, and I thought this the time to catch you without fail." The voice was that of Captain Rolfe.

"I *am* just going out, captain, and I'm hurried; but if you will step in I'll be back in ten minutes."

"Well-l, ordinarily I would not detain you, and-d, pardon me, if you were going to Major Berrien's they are all at luncheon. I have just left there."

Brewster flushed in spite of his effort at control. His first impulse was to say he was going over anyhow, if only to leave word, but, since he could not hope to see her, what was the use? It chafed him, however, to note that Rolfe, in that calmly superior way of his, was pressing on into the hall, as much as to say, "It is my will that you give up what you have in view and attend at once to my behest,"

just as though Brewster were still his second lieutenant, instead c First Lieutenant Brewster commanding the "Black Horse" troop. must be confessed that there was about Rolfe an intangible somethin that ever seemed to give that impression to the juniors. It was one o the things that set their teeth on edge, as they expressed it, and s them against him. Feeling as he did towards the captain, and ex asperated at the way in which events seemed conspiring against hin Brewster threw open his door.

"Walk in, as I said, captain. Make yourself at home. I wish t go into Haddock's a moment, and will be right back." It wasn't tha he had anything to say to Haddock, but Haddock had succeeded hi as second lieutenant of Rolfe's troop, and was no fonder of his ster self-willed commander than Curly himself had been. It was simpl that he would not yield a moral victory to Rolfe, and that in namin Haddock he knew he gave at least a slight return for the annoyanc afforded him by the captain's untimely call.

Giving no sign whatever as Brewster sprang away down the step the captain passed on into the plainly-furnished sitting-room. Alread McCann was busy hauling out the lieutenant's field-boots, breeche and overcoat, whisking off the dust and indulging in Milesian com ment as he did so. At sight of Rolfe he abruptly ceased, bustled fo ward and offered the captain a chair, and a moment later bolted acro the hall to perform similar service in overhauling and dusting M Randolph's possessions.

Left to himself, Rolfe wearily turned to the mantel, and, witho show of interest, glanced over the various photographs there displaye They were mainly of army friends, young fellows in whom he fe slight interest at any time and none at all now. So were those in t basket on the round table. Brewster was popular, if one were to judg by the array of pictures that had been sent to him by their prototype Then there was a large, handsome album lying open on the desk ne the window. Turning listlessly thither, Rolfe gave a shrug of t shoulders, something almost like a shudder, at sight of the phot graph which lay uppermost, a cabinet portrait, highly burnished an finished, of an exuberant woman in evening dress. In that neighborhoo everybody knew her by sight. He himself had received invitations i her hand to lunch or to dinner. He knew the writing of the note th lay beside the album, first page uppermost. He would have had n *eyes at* all had he not seen the "Carroll, *mon ami*," with which it bega

'ith a shiver of disgust he whirled over a page of the album, as though cover and hide the beguiling face, the betraying words, and then rewster came bounding back and in. Rolfe's hand was still on the bum as he turned to face him. The eyes of the two men met, and again rewster flushed hotly. He remembered that only in the morning's ail had the large packet arrived containing this unasked-for and unxpected addition to his portrait-gallery. He had not opened it until fter court,—had not more than glanced at the photograph even then, eautiful as it was from an artistic point of view. Then that note and iat idiotic semi-sentimental beginning! She had never called him 'arroll, but in certain evasive, insinuating, in—well, we have no word or it in all the vocabulary of the United States—in a way he could iot but see and could not find a way to object to, she had been lately 'erging in that direction. It was "Now, Mr. Carroll Brewster," or 'my good friend Carroll," or "Sir Carroll," or in-some-way Carroll;)ut here was an out-and-out Carroll, the first of the kind. A month efore he might not have flinched, now he shrank from the mere idea if familiarity of the faintest kind. He had been striving to cut loose rom her in every possible way, but hers was a friendship that "clung loser than a brother," and just as sure as shooting Rolfe must have een that infernal picture, those misleading words. Brewster read it in Rolfe's calm brown eyes, but he would not discuss matters with him, nuch less stoop to explain.

"You wish to see me, captain. Will you take a seat?"

"No. What I have to ask need occupy but little time, and the all will sound in a moment or two. I am going to ask you a question, nd as man to man I want you to answer it." He paused, as though waiting submissive reply.

"And the question?" asked Brewster, finally and unyielding.

"I was in hopes you would assure me of a readiness to answer. Vhatsoever have been the differences between us in the past, you can ever accuse me of having pried into your affairs, and the question I wish) ask is one of deep importance to myself, and its answer cannot, I beeve, unpleasantly involve you." And still Brewster stood silent, the lue eyes looking straight into the brown. "I will not prolong matters nnecessarily. What I desire to know, Mr. Brewster, is this: Have you r have you not, some knowledge of the past history of Sergeant Ellis?"

"Pardon me, Captain Rolfe, but I do not see how that can concern ou in the least."

"I have stated substantially that it did," was the quiet reply, after a moment's thought. "It concerns me very deeply. I need to know something of his antecedents. I have reason to ask, and I repeat my question."

There was a painful pause. Then Brewster spoke firmly:

"Captain Rolfe, it is a question I refuse to answer."

IV.

That night, despite the long hours in the saddle, the young officers had bidden their lady friends to an informal dance in the hop-room. It was just a week after Nita Guthrie's adventure, and already, except in the thoughts of two or three men, that strange affair was a thing of the past. People had settled down to an acceptance of her own explanation of the cause, not that it was entirely satisfactory, but because no other seemed plausible. Just why a girl should have been rendered nervous and upset becauses he had had a proposal, Mrs. Vance, of course, could not understand,—"especially," said she, "a girl who was reputed to have had so many offers." It was laughingly remarked by various military Benedicts that since the moment when Miss Guthrie's scream of terror had appalled the garrison the dames and damsels of their several households had shown an unwonted degree of timidity visiting about the post after night-fall, and that much more than the traditional amount of hunting behind curtains and under bedsteads was now going on. Berrien was especially jocular, and more than ever disposed to tell his cronies in her presence that Berengaria had said this or Berengaria had done that, the this or that being something more than usually absurd or improbable. But in the conversations held of late in the sanctity of Berengaria's boudoir the major had been anything but jocular. There was one incident of that evening that had caused him deep perplexity. He had never for a moment forgotten his wife's allusion to Winifred,—Winifred, the apple of his eye. The possibility of her having lost her young heart to, or even having come to feel more than passing interest in, Carroll Brewster, was something that troubled him far more than he cared to admit. Like many another father, he had gone on fancying his daughter only a child,—one to whom the idea of falling in love would not present itself for years to come, and then only on parental intimation that it was expected

of her. Personally and officially he had nothing against Brewster. He liked him quite as well as he did any of the junior officers, and he liked most of them very much indeed. It was as soldierly, manly a lot of young fellows as one could ask to see, but in the close comradeship and intimacy of frontier life men get to know one another so thoroughly and so well that the foibles, weaknesses, and waywardness of the animal are apt to be far more prominently mentioned in garrison-chat than his sterling or lovable traits. Some men, it may be said, have to die before their virtues can be in the least appreciated.

More than once had the major closely interrogated his wife as to the reason of her statement. Had the young fellow dared to speak to Winifred without first asking his permission? Had Winifred dared to fall in love before—but no, that was impossible. "What makes you think she cares for him?"—"How do you know?"—"Why should she care for him, anyhow?" were the impatient questions that rose to his lips. To one and all she had simply replied that she knew because she knew,—woman's unanswerable reason. No, Winifred had not told her. They had never exchanged a word upon the subject. No, Mr. Brewster had not spoken, if by that was meant of love or marriage, for Winifred would have told her on the instant. But half a dozen other people had spoken. The whole garrison could see he was deeply in love with her. Every glance, word, gesture, act, told the story with unerring certainty. "Is there a day, is there an hour, when it is possible for him to see her, speak with her, that he is not by her side?" asked Mrs. Berrien. "You must realize it, major, and you must decide what should be done. She likes him well, that I know, for she is ever ready to dance with him or ride with him, and I can see how her eyes brighten and her color rises when his step or his voice is heard on the veranda.

"But, confound it, Bess!"—which was much nearer Madam's proper name,—"he hasn't anything but his pay."

Mrs. Berrien laughed softly.

"But, Richard, dear, even that detriment has occasionally been overlooked."

"Oh, of course. Exactly. I know. Neither had I. That is what you mean, I suppose. But things were very different then."

"Granted again, Dick,—very different; so much so that were things as they used to be I would be utterly opposed to her marrying in the army."

This being just exactly the view the major had not taken, he could only stare at her in astonishment.

"Bess, what on earth do you mean?"

"Just what I say, Richard. I like what I've seen of Mr. Brewster very much, and I don't wonder Winnie fancies him. He is a gentleman; he is a fine soldier; he has a good record; he is well connected; his family is one of the best that you or I know; he has everything in point of fact to recommend him that you had, my liege, and he has none of your bad habits. You used to drink and smoke and play poker, and, Richard, sometimes you used to swear."

"Well, everybody did in those days."

"Exactly, and hardly anybody does to-day, except, perhaps, one hears a little odd language when the wind is blowing from the drill-ground. But in other respects things are, indeed, different. You and your cronies sometimes talk about how slow and how indifferent young officers are now as compared with what they were twenty years ago. Dick, if the army were to-day what it was when I married you I would whisk Winnie out of this garrison and never let her venture inside another. But it isn't. In every possible way that a woman and a mother can see, it is vastly better, and you know it. I can conceive of worse fates for our daughter than that she should marry such a man as Mr. Brewster and into such a society as we have here to-day. You are eagerly looking forward to your promotion. Do you think being lieutenant-colonel will compensate you for leaving such comrades and friends as you have in the Twelfth?"

"I am hoping to exchange."

"You can't, Dick. Nobody will transfer with you who once gets into the Twelfth. And now as to Winifred. You always liked Mr. Brewster. You rather preferred him until lately. What has changed your view?"

"Nothing, except—why—why, Bess, you must have seen or heard, for one thing, this affair with Mrs.——you know."

"As utterly one-sided an affair as ever was known," said Mrs. Berrien, stoutly. "I believe I can see clear through it. I despise the woman. She has always made a dead set at some one of the officers stationed here, I am told. She was just as absurd about Mr. Martin of the Eleventh,—everybody says so in town; and she picked out Brewster because he was the handsomest of the new lot when our regiment came in. Ask any one you choose, and I think my view will

old good. Ask Captain Rolfe what he thinks; and he and Mr. Brewster are not on friendly terms."

"I have asked Rolfe; I asked him only this evening," replied Berrien, turning redder; "and he begged to be excused from expressing an opinion."

"Why?"

"Well, he wouldn't say, but he had seen something or other that we hadn't, and he doesn't like Brewster. I can't have a man making love to Winnie one minute and that calcimined creature the next. I wish there were no dance to-night. I want to see Rolfe again. Who takes her?"

"Mr. Brewster, of course. He asked her two days ago, when the affair was first projected. He is in the parlor now; but so are all the others."

The major stepped over to the window and began thrumming with his pudgy fingers upon the pane. All the joviality and gladness seemed gone from his face. The lights were already beginning to twinkle in the quarters across the parade, and darkness, "wafted downward like a feather," was shutting out the long line of shadowy bluffs beyond the stream. Down-stairs he could hear the sound of joyous chatter, the deep voices of the men mingling with the rippling, silvery laughter he knew and loved so well. How happy the child seemed! How she loved the regiment and gloried in his profession! How proud she was at school of the photographs he had from time to time sent of his brother officers, and how the other girls, her letters declared, envied her because she was a soldier's daughter and had lived on the wild frontier! He could hear the sound of other girlish voices, too, Winifred's friends from town, but he found that his ear listened only for hers. How blithe and musical and full of hope and gladness it seemed! How lovely she looked as she came down dressed for dinner just as he returned from that odd, constrained talk with Rolfe! Poor Rolfe! he was given over to the blue devils now, sure enough. He and Kenyon and "Pills," the doctor, formed a triumvirate of sympathetic souls, for since Jennie and "the kids" had gone Holden's life seemed to have fallen into the sear and yellow leaf. Kenyon, as in duty bound, was making the circuit of the garrison returning calls just now, but Rolfe went nowhere except to the doctor's. There he could be found almost every evening, for ever since Nita Guthrie's visit the walls of the old house seemed charmed to him. "Begad," said the major, "I'll

slip over there to-night myself while the rest of the folks are dancing. I want to see what it is he is holding back."

For the life of him he could not be repellent in manner to Brewster when he went down-stairs. The three young fellows honored with invitations on this particular evening were Brewster, Randolph, and Ridgeway,—Brewster because he was to be Winifred's escort to the hop, the others because they had made the best of matters and invited the other girls, Ridgeway, be it known, not without inward exasperation. He fancied Miss Kitty Pennoyer as a substitute for Winifred Berrien about as much or as little as one is content with a back seat when he cannot have a box. But it kept him "in touch with the house," so to speak, and gave him opportunities at least of occasional word with the beautiful girl whom he so admired. He knew he was no match for Brewster so far as physique or reputation was concerned, but then girls had been known to prefer patrimonial estate to personal charms, and he meant at least to try the effect of his solid qualifications as against those which made Brewster so attractive to the sex. He knew the major liked him well enough, and he thought he could count on the good offices of Mrs. Berrien, but he was not so sure about Winifred. When the jovial major appeared he was in readiness to pay his respects at once, and was cordially welcomed by that red-faced veteran; so was Randolph; and then there stood Brewster at Winnie's side, both, as it so happened, looking straight at him.

"Well, by Jove, they do make almost an ideal couple!" he said to himself. Brewster fair, stalwart, straight, and soldierly, a picture of manliness and vigor. Winifred dark, yet with so rich a glow mantling the soft creamy skin, with such glorious deep brown-black eyes, so lovely and slender and graceful a form. Her shapely head seemed just on a level with his broad shoulder, and something he had been saying to her in low tone just as the others were greeting her father had sent the blood surging to her cheek. Berrien thought she had never seemed so beautiful, even in his fond eyes. For the first time he began to realize it was a woman, not a child, who stood before him. No wonder Brewster loved her with his whole soul. Why, if he didn't!—pshaw! what was he thinking of?

"How are you, Brewster, lad? Glad you're here so early. Your troop made my eyes dance this afternoon." Oh, surrender ignominious! So ended his effort to be repe lent. How could he be, with Winifred's *soft eyes looking* at him so wistfully, so fondly?

And it was good to see Brewster's appreciation of the veteran's illusion to his troop. Gorham, the captain, had been away on leave for some weeks, during which time the lieutenant had had command, and, soldier that he was, had done his utmost to improve the drill and efficiency of his men. It was about the only troop that did not come in for a rasping of some kind at the hands of the colonel that afternoon, and, being in Berrien's battalion, reflected credit, of course, upon the major. Brewster's eyes had kindled and he had lowered his sabre in glad acknowledgment of the brief words of commendation that fell from Farquhar's lips as he completed his rigid inspection of the equipment of the glossy blacks, and the major had supplemented the words by a nod and a glance that spoke volumes. But, while all this was as joy to his soul, it was as nothing as compared with being praised by her father in her hearing. At that precise moment Carroll Brewster stood the happiest man within the limits of a crowded county.

And now at ten o'clock the hop-room was well filled. A number of pleasant people had driven out from town. All the garrison girls were there, most of the elders among the mammas, all the juniors among the matrons, and the dance went merrily on. Delightful music the orchestra of the Twelfth was ever ready to play, and this night their leader seemed inspired. The affair was entirely informal. No written invitations had been sent out. Officers were all in undress uniform, but, with few exceptions, all were there, and the broad stripes of scarlet or yellow or white were to be seen everywhere throughout the room. Mrs. Berrien, a smile of motherly pride in her handsome dark eyes, was chatting pleasantly with the wife of a local magnate who could not say enough about Winifred's grace and beauty, and the gaze of both women seemed to follow the child as she appeared literally to float over the smoothly-polished floor, just lightly borne on Brewster's stalwart arm. It was one of the oldest and sweetest of the Strauss waltzes that was being played at the moment, "Geschichten aus dem Wienerwald," and, slowly reversing and turning, with the eyes of more than half the spectators and wall-flowers upon them, Brewster and Winifred were now gliding across the upper end of the hall within a few feet of the smiling row of lookers-on, almost within touch of the mother's hand. His face wore a look no woman could for an instant mistake. His eyes, full of passionate tenderness, were fixed at the instant upon her lovely face. His lips were moving. Something was being said.

"*There* is one couple at least that is utterly lost to the rest of the world," said Mrs. Vance, for of a sudden the lovely upturned face was bowed almost upon his arm, and the deep, dark eyes were veiled and the soft flush seemed to leap through the creamy skin to her very temples.

"Oh, has that fellow Ridgeway no sense whatever?" she continued, with all a woman's horror of an interrupted love-scene, for at the instant Ridgeway had darted forth, watch in hand, with a triumphant shout, "Time! my half!" And without a word, with one swift upward glance into Brewster's longing eyes,—a glance fairly brimming over with meaning,—Winifred released herself from the half-encircling arm and placed her hand on Ridgeway's sleeve. Another moment, and she was being whirled away under the guidance of a very different partner.

"Miss Berrien's fan," said Brewster, bowing a moment later before her mother. "I was charged to place it in your hands." His heart was beating high. The music seemed thrilling, throbbing, through his veins. He longed to hold forth both hands and say, "Read my secret. Know my heart! I love her! oh, I love her!" But there sat Mrs. Van Ness, the banker's wife, with broad sympathy and approval glowing in her good-natured face.

"Ah, Mr. Brewster, it wasn't easy to give up half that dance,—was it, now? Why do you do such things in the army?"

"There were only four waltzes, Mrs. Van Ness," smiled Mrs. Berrien. "Mr. Brewster had had one, and had claimed this, and Mr. Ridgeway had had none at all, and Winifred and I both thought he ought not to be denied entirely. It is the only round dance he knows."

Saying no word, Brewster had dropped behind Mrs. Berrien's chair.

"He doesn't know that any too well," said Mrs. Van Ness to herself. "Where could he have learned to dance?" The floor was crowded at the moment, and unusually slippery, so that reversing or avoidance of collision was rendered the more difficult even for experts. Twice had Ridgeway bumped into somebody or other, without grievous disaster, but now, as luck would have it, came catastrophe. In the effort to check himself suddenly just as he seemed shooting into contact with a slender light-battery man whom he could not have touched had he tried, the young fellow's feet flew from under him. Left to herself, Winifred would no more have fallen than a bird. Drowning men clutch at straws, and poor, rich Ridgeway's instant impulse on feeling *himself going was to* clasp her the tighter, dragging her with him in

is ignominious crash. His tumble was bad enough, though he was nhurt, but hers was worse. With violent shock her head struck the olished floor, and the room swam around. A dozen men flew to aid er, but Brewster seemed to have seen it coming. He leaped through ıe air, and, bending over the prostrate Ridgeway, had her up in his trong arms and over at the window before another hand could touch er.

"Quick, Hunt, some water!" he ordered, his teeth firmly set. Then ıow his eyes softened as he looked down into her pallid face! "Oh, ıy darling, my darling!" he murmured in that little, shell-like ear; nd then, with wild anxiety in her eyes, Mrs. Berrien burst through he sympathetic circle.

It was all over in a moment. The music never ceased. She was tunned only for an instant, and then, though Mrs. Berrien would have nterposed, like the little heroine she was, Winifred was on her feet and ıolding out her hand to poor, bewildered, miserable Ridgeway.

"But come, we must finish the dance," she said, and in so saying ıiveted the chains of his serfdom.

"*I* wouldn't dance with him again," said Mrs. Vance, who had an ıpinion to express on every subject. "Why, he almost broke her head."

"If she didn't she'd break his heart, Mrs. Vance," was old Ken- ron's reply, as he watched the scene. "That girl's a lady."

"Am I not to be honored to-night, Mr. Brewster?" said a low voice in his ear as he stood silent, anxious, preoccupied, by Mrs. Berien's side, his eyes following Winifred about the room. The very ntonation made him turn cold.

"I beg your pardon, Mrs. Knowles, I only saw a moment ago that ou were here."

She was leaning on her husband's arm. "Not half a bad fellow, f he is a blind fool," said those of his own sex who knew him. Years ıer senior, he was yet her slave. Witness his coming out from town his late November night solely at her behest to attend a dance to which ıeither was bidden.

"Ah, I wonder you saw at all, my friend, with that vision before our eyes; and I presume that was why you had no time to come in erson with your invitation."

"No invitations are sent out for these little dances, Mrs. Knowles."

"There, there, I'm not going to upbraid you here.—Mr. Knowles, ould you get me a glass of water?—Mr. Brewster, will you not pre-

sent me to Mrs. Berrien? We have exchanged calls, but I have not yet had the pleasure."

What could he do? The request was as audible to Mrs. Berrien as to him, and, even as she spoke, Mrs. Knowles passed around in front of him so as almost to face the major's wife, taking the introduction as a matter of course. He glanced appealingly at Mrs. Berrien as he murmured the name. He blessed her in his heart of hearts for the calm courtesy with which she greeted the local celebrity. He bit his lips with vexation at Mrs. Knowles's very first words:

"I could not resist the longing to know you, Mrs. Berrien, for I am utterly lost in admiration of your lovely daughter." She, daring to speak of one so pure, so innocent, so utterly beyond her! Turning impatiently away, he encountered Major Berrien's eyes fixed upon him with a look that was not good to see. He stepped forward, hoping to explain, but Berrien, who had just entered the room after an absence of over half an hour, whirled sharply about, plainly indicating that he did not wish to speak. This was bad enough. He had been near the seventh heaven of bliss. He had almost touched the gates of pearl. Now they were receding through clouds and darkness, fading in the distance. But worse was to come. Mrs. Knowles had seated herself by Mrs. Berrien's side, pouring forth rapid compliment and confidence. The music had ceased. Ridgeway, with Winifred on his arm, was approaching slowly, checked every moment by man or woman who begged to hear that she was not shocked or seriously hurt. It was not until she was within a few yards that Winifred caught sight of her mother's companion,—caught sight of the faint gesture and the warning in her mother's eyes. Then she pressed her escort's arm and turned him away.

"Oh, do call Miss Winifred here. I so long to meet her, Mrs. Berrien," cried Mrs. Knowles; and what could Mrs. Berrien do? The flush died out of Winifred's cheeks, the soft lustre from her eyes. Obedient to her mother's unwilling summons, she stood before the lady from town, but she stood erect, and there was not the faintest cordiality in her manner. The long-lashed lids drooped over her eyes as she bowed to the elder woman, but her hand, to Ridgeway's delight, refused to withdraw from his arm. No one saw more plainly than did Mrs. Knowles that nothing could be more unwelcome than that introduction; and it stung her to the quick. Checking the fulsome flatteries *that were ready* on her tongue, she said,—

"I could not go, Miss Berrien, without saying how frightened I as for you and how glad to see you were not hurt." Then, turning nguidly, "And now, Carroll, will you take me to the carriage? omebody can call Mr. Knowles.—*Good*-night, Mrs. Berrien. *Do* ome and see me." And, taking Mr. Brewster's unoffered arm, she d him down the brightly-lighted and observant room.

V.

It is Mr. Thomas Hughes who asks in "Tom Brown at Oxford," Which is the true—ay, and the brave—man, he who trembles before woman or he before whom a woman trembles?" There are men who uld have found it no difficult matter to flatly decline to serve even temporary escort to a woman so evidently bent on mischief,—who uld have rebuked then and there the assumption of intimacy and oprietorship which if unchallenged might mean disaster. Brewster d neither. She read him well enough to see that, though he was too dignant to permit himself to speak, he was also too much of a ntleman to snub her. Bravely, therefore, she bore her part, keeping an animated flow of meaningless words until fairly out of the hop-om, then promptly shifting to that feminine coigne of vantage herein lies woman's greatest strength,—a gush of silent tears. She new too much to add reproaches, accusations, angry words: that ould have given him something to answer, something to overthrow. is only when a woman weeps, silently, desolately, showing no anger, aking no charge, that she has man at her mercy. Utterly false as as the position in which she had placed Brewster before the garrison orld at this moment, he actually did not know but that he might be amable for all,—that he might be much less sinned against than nning. He was no fool, only so much of one as the strongest of his ind sometimes become in the hands of the softer sex. Samson had is Delilah; Hercules, Omphale; Belisarius, poor devil, had both ntonia and Theodora.

It was bad enough to have her shrink to the opposite side of the rriage the instant he had assisted her in and there give way to parently uncontrollable weeping; it was bad enough to have to and there for a moment or two until the lady's long-suffering spouse

should be hunted up (he had been having a cigar with one or two of the elders in the sanctity of the little smoking-room); but what made matters simply intolerable was that just at the foot of the stairs, under the broad gallery, just where the lantern on the big pillar would shine full upon himself and his lachrymose partner, stood Major Berrien in earnest conversation with Captain Rolfe, and both looked up, glanced quickly but searchingly at him and at her, raised their forage-caps in silent salutation, and turned away. Poor Curly! As in duty bound, he leaned into the carriage, not too ardently begging the weeping dame to say what had so distressed her, but she would not reply. Possibly she thought he might yet be induced to clamber in after her and there in the dark interior tenderly beseech her to speak; but he was all eagerness to hasten back to the hop-room. If he could but have speech with Mrs. Berrien a moment, he might make her understand the situation: she had always been cordial and sympathetic. But it was three or four minutes, perhaps, before Knowles came, thanked him for his attention to his wife, stepped in, and—how her tears were explained to her liege lord nobody knows. Somebody who knew her, however, was mean enough to suggest that they were of the theatrical and controllable order, and, as Randolph expressed it, "she braced up and grinned as soon as Curly was left behind."

The instant the carriage rolled away, Brewster turned and sped up the stairs. At the very top he met the colonel coming hastily down, a brown telegraph envelope in his hand, the soldier operator, with a look of repressed excitement on his face, close at his heels.

"Come with me, Brewster," said Farquhar, in preoccupied but positive manner.—"Morgan, find the adjutant and quartermaster, and say that I wish to see them at the office."

"I'll get my cap and follow you at once, sir," answered Brewster, and hastened into the dressing-room. There he met Hazlett and Thorpe just coming out, throwing their cavalry capes over their shoulders, silent and preoccupied like their chief. Seizing his cap, Brewster paused one longing instant for a glance into the hop-room. Again the floor was thronged. To the merriest of music—"Toujours Galant"—the younger dancers were fairly romping in the half-galop, half-polka step the joyous tune inspires, and in their midst, not romping, but dancing with a slower, almost languid grace, Winifred Berrien appeared to his troubled gaze, her slender waist half encircled by Randolph's arm, her dark eyes downcast, her color and animation gone.

"Come, Brewster," called Hazlett from the door-way, "Farquhar ants us at once, and does not want anybody else to know."

"What's up?"

"You'll know in a moment. The colonel doesn't want it mentioned ere."

At the foot of the stairs under the glare of the same big lamp, Farquhar, with Berrien and Rolfe, stood waiting. Glancing impatiently up as though to make sure of his men, Farquhar took Berrien by the arm and silently led the way, Rolfe and Hazlett, Thorpe and Brewster, falling in behind. It was but a few steps to the office.

"Pull down the shades, orderly; and one lamp will be enough. That'll do. Close the door, and remain outside," said Farquhar, as he threw off his cape, then silently waited until the sleepy trumpeter had carried out his orders and vanished. By this time, too, Warren and Drake, the adjutant and the quartermaster, had come bustling in, and, noting the silence of those already on the ground, simply removed their caps and waited the colonel's pleasure. For an instant Farquhar stood tapping the lid of the desk with the butt of his pencil and studying the long despatch which he held in his hand. Then he looked up.

"Gentlemen, we are ordered to the field; one battalion to go at nce, the other to follow in ten hours,—just as soon as cars can be rovided.—Berrien, you will lead off."

For a moment not a word from anybody; then the major spoke:

"How much time have we, sir?"

"I cannot tell. You load up the moment the railway-company an get a train here. They have plenty of engines and cars at the unction, and ought to be able to furnish what we need by daybreak. Meantime, you will have to rouse your men, pack up everything that s not to be taken, cook three days' rations, and be ready to get the orses aboard. Go at it as quietly as possible. I want nobody at the op to know of the orders. Let the dance go on. Your men must ake all their blankets and the heaviest clothing they have. No one nows what may be in store for us either in furs or fighting."

Again dead silence, broken only by the rapid clicking of the telegraph instrument in the adjoining room and the soft, melodious strains orne on the wings of the whispering night wind. Another waltz, nd one which she had promised him he should have the latter half of, ought Brewster. Even now he listened yearningly to recognize the

strain. Ay, he might have known it! her favorite of all,—"Love's Dream-land."

But the colonel was speaking again: "Of course you will do well to weed out any sick or ineffectives you may have. It is going to be a bitter campaign, and after our summer and fall under Southern suns will be all the tougher. Holden will go with your command, Berrien, and I have sent for him. Here are your four troop commanders: so you may as well give your instructions at once and let them get to work."

"You have heard the colonel's orders, gentlemen: I do not know of anything I have to add. Start out your first sergeants and the cooks at once, and let the men pack without unnecessary noise. I will give all further details as soon as Colonel Farquhar and I have had a few moments' conference."

Again the telegraph operator, with a despatch.

"I thought so," said Farquhar. "Murray, the division superintendent, was with us in the Shenandoah and at Five Forks. He wires that the train will be here at five o'clock at the latest,—two engines, twenty freight- or cattle-cars, two baggage-cars, four passenger day-cars, and a Pullman. It is eleven now. If anything is wanted you'll find me here."

Back again into the chill night air, under the shining, starry vault, Berrien and his four troop leaders paused for a moment on the gravel walk.

"Hazlett, I suppose you will need to see Mrs. Hazlett home, and you, Thorpe. Better go and rouse your sergeants first, then come back to the hop-room; but, mind you, not a word there. Rolfe, you and Brewster are among the blessed to-night: you have no wives to break the news to. I will give your subalterns the tip to report to you just as soon as we break up."

Three hands went to the cap-visor in salute, three officers turned away. Warren, the adjutant, came hurrying out:

"Oh, major, Colonel Farquhar begs that you will step in a moment."

"You had something to say, Brewster?" asked the major, coldly.

"Yes, sir; I—I hope to hurry back in time to escort Miss Berrien home."

"No, don't trouble yourself. I'll attend to that. You have other matters to occupy you." And if ever a father's tone signified that dis-

issal was intended, and that further attentions were forbidden, Berren's did as he abruptly turned, leaving Brewster stunned and silent t the edge of the parade.

In ten minutes lights were dancing like will-o'-the-wisps about he gallery of the men's quarters. Quick, bounding footsteps could be eard, and the low, brief orders of the sergeants as they went flitting rom door to door. Then half-suppressed exclamations, an occasional mothered yell of excitement or delight from some enthusiastic Paddy, very ready for a frolic or a fight. Then a gradually swelling murmur of voices, the rapid scurry of booted feet, a clattering up and down the stairways, the slamming and banging of barrack doors, the dragging forth of heavy chests and boxes, the clank of a dropped sabre, and then people at the hop-room, strolling out on the broad veranda for fresh air or flirtation, became aware of the unusual illumination over across the parade, and listening heard the sounds of bustle and preparation. And then lights began to pop up among the windows of the second battalion, where the news had rapidly spread, and where dozens of troopers tumbled out of their blankets and into their boots forthwith and went charging *en masse* upon their own sergeants to know what it meant that "them fellers in the first battalion had had orders to be up and getting and none had come for us." In less time than it takes to tell it, the tidings spread from porch to hall that "something was up," and other people, men and women, old officers and young, matrons and maids, quit their places in the Lancers and came streaming forth upon the gallery. "What's the matter?"—"Is it fire? I heard no alarm?"—"The trumpets haven't sounded."—"See! there's the orderly trumpeter going across parade now, running to the office."—"Why, the office is lighted, too."—"Where's Warren?"—"What does it mean?" These and dozens of other verbal conjectures and suggestions flew from lip to lip. Men excused themselves to their fair partners, seized their caps, scurried away down the steps, and sped over towards the lights at head-quarters. A dozen or more suddenly disappeared in this way, and then it was found that the colonel and Berrien and Hazlett and Thorpe and Brewster, too, were all missing. And then Mrs. Thorpe's voice was heard wailing out upon the night air:

"Oh, Mrs. Berrien! Mrs. Berrien! I know what it means. I saw the telegraph operator coming up the steps. It's orders,—orders for the field."

And then indeed

> There was hurrying to and fro,
> And gathering tears, and tremblings of distress,
> And cheeks all pale which but an hour ago
> Blushed at the praise of their own loveliness.

And the dance was forgotten, and the musicians, astonished, found the lighted hall rapidly emptying of the revellers, and women pressed, pallid and tearful, into the dressing-room, gathering up their wraps with hasty hand and hurrying forth to take the arm of husband or lover, as though claiming that right to the very last. And then in some way the word went round, "Only one battalion goes,—only Berrien's;" and those whose lords were attached to the other plucked up heart and spirit for a moment, and in the midst of it all, pale but tearless, Mrs. Berrien stood waiting patiently for Dick's return, and by her side, even paler, but as brave and tearless and patient, Winifred clung to her mother's arm and would take no other. Ridgeway, who had scampered over to the office among the dozen departed, came panting back up the stairway.

"Is it true?" asked Mrs. Berrien.

"Yes; the first battalion goes at daybreak. The major says he will be over in a few moments."

"Mrs. Berrien, permit me to escort you home," said Major Kenyon, hastening after Ridgeway up the stair. "I have just seen Berrien: he has to go to the barracks a few minutes."

"Miss Winifred, may I have the pleasure? Mr. Brewster is, of course, needed with his troop, and mine does not go," said Ridgeway, proffering his arm. The girl hesitated one moment, half clinging to her mother's side, and casting one swift, appealing glance into her face.

"Yes, daughter, we'll go home at once," was the low-toned answer as Mrs. Berrien took old Kenyon's arm, and with bowed head moved towards the stairs, her escort eagerly, volubly explaining to her that he felt sure the object of the sudden move was merely to overawe the Indians by a display of force. "It is exactly what was done here with such success a few years ago, Mrs. Berrien. The Cheyennes were wild for an outbreak, and Sheridan simply called in troops from everywhere, and when the Indians saw the great array of cavalry and infantry they caved at once. Never had to fire a shot, madam. And *that's the proper way to* handle this matter. That's what this means.

'he Sioux will be so disheartened they won't dare resist even if orders re given to disarm them.—God forgive me the lie!" he muttered nder his breath.—"Of course it's exasperating to think of the 'welfth being sent so far away at such a time, but better now, believe ne, than later after those misguided wretches had had a chance to jump."

But Mrs. Berrien had lived, heaven only knows how, through many . similar experience. She had seen time and again her husband's ommand hurried forth on the trail or across the path of savage foe. Never yet had they returned unscathed, never yet without serious loss f officers and men. She could only bow her head the lower while ier lips moved in silent prayer. Just as they reached the gate a tall 'orm came springing after them through the darkness, and Brewster's 'oice was heard:

"I hurried back to the hop-room, Miss Winifred, only to find you one. I had expected to escort you home. You have heard the iews? You know our orders have come?" He glared at Ridgeway, s much as to say, "Leave, man; you are one too many, as you ought o see." But the junior lieutenant stoutly held his ground, nor did Winifred withdraw her hand from his arm.

"I have heard; yes, it seems very sudden," was all she could or vould say, and the dark eyes were shrouded from his longing gaze.

"We'll be off by daybreak, I fear. I cannot hope to see you gain before we have to go," he went on, desperately.

"Won't you come in, Mr. Brewster?" called Mrs. Berrien from he steps. "You and Mr. Ridgeway can spare a moment, can you iot?—Oh, Dick, here you are!" she cried, as with quick, energetic tep the major sprang across the road and appeared under the dim ight of the garrison lamp, and back to the gate she sped to meet him nd to twine her arm in his.

"I'll say good-night, ladies," said Kenyon. "I'll call in in the iorning to see if I can be of any service. Now I must trot over and elp Holden to pack." And, unrestrained, he went.

"Brewster, Ridgeway, I won't ask you in now. You have much o attend to, and but little time.—Run in, Winifred," said the major. —"I'll be with you at the barracks in a few moments, gentlemen."

Slowly but obediently Winifred stepped forward.

"Good-night, Mr. Ridgeway," she murmured, holding out her ttle hand. "Thank you very much."

Berrien stood *impatiently* at the gate, as though to see her safely

through. With trembling lips Brewster spoke as he sprang to her side.

"Good-by. Don't forget," was all he could murmur, as he seized her hand, clinging to it one miserable moment with both his own.

"Good-by," she said, in low, tremulous tone, but withdrawing her hand, withholding her glance. The major threw his arm about her and almost thrust her through the gate.

"It is good-night only, not good-by, Mr. Brewster," said Mrs. Berrien, kindly, forgetting her own misery for the moment in the contemplation of the woe in his face. Then they hurried within-doors, Winifred drooping before them, and then the door closed, and Brewster and Ridgeway stood there confronting each other under the light. For a moment neither spoke.

"Have you lost your crossed sabres?" said Brewster, finally, noting that the handsome cap-badge of solid gold which Ridgeway ordinarily wore upon the front of his forage-cap was now missing.

"No; I took it off to pin Miss Berrien's wrap about her throat."

A moment more Brewster stood, as though he would ask another question, then abruptly turned and plunged into the darkness.

Meantime, Major Kenyon had trudged up the row towards Holden's quarters. Already the lights were beginning to gleam from the various houses around the big quadrangle of the parade, where a dozen of the cavalry officers were now busily engaged in preparation for the sudden move. Over at the hospital, too, the lamps were being lighted in the steward's room and the dispensary. Holden's hall door stood wide open. The hall itself was dark, but a lamp was alight in the sitting-room, and that door, too, was wide open. A tall form passed across the illumined space as Kenyon drew near. He stopped for a moment at the gate, listening to the sound of bustle, the whistling and singing of the men at the barracks. "Hardship, hunger, privation, suffering ahead of them, even if they don't have hard fighting," he muttered to himself. "In thirty-six hours they'll be freezing, poor devils, for not a man in the battalion has a winter kit; and just hear them laugh and sing as though the world had no joy like soldiering! God guard them,—and these poor wives and sweethearts here. Why isn't it my lot to go instead of Berrien's? Who the devil would shed a tear for me?" He shook himself together and tramped heavily into the gate and up the steps.

"Doc!" he called at the door-way. "Oh, Doc!"

No answer. The house was silent.

"Oh, Holden! Where are you?" Still no reply. "Odd," said Kenyon: "I thought I saw him in here. Who could that have been?" With the confidence of army intimacy he tramped through the sitting-room on the left of the hall, then into the dining-room beyond. No one there. Then across the hall again and into Holden's own sleeping-room at the rear of the house. The kerosene lamp was burning on the dressing-table. The bed had been occupied. Evidently Holden had turned in early, only to be routed out by the orders of the colonel. The floor creaked somewhere overhead. Then he was sure he heard a quick, light foot-fall on the stair. "Oh, Doc! here I am. It's Kenyon," he cried. But no answer came. Once more returning to the hall, and thence to the sitting-room, he found them empty as before. The parlor door on the west side was closed. Slowly he strolled out on the front piazza, just in time to catch sight of a tall form in the dark circular cape striding up to the gate. Surely that was Holden. Then he heard a hail:

"Hello, Rolfe. That you?"

"Yes. You go with us, do you?"

"I do. Won't you come in?"

"Not just now: I've got to go to my quarters a moment. I'll be in by and by. We'll have to make a night of it."

"All right. Kathleen will get us some coffee after a while. Bring in some of the others with you." Then the doctor came bounding up the steps. "Hello, Kenyon. You here? Well, you were right after all, weren't you? I've just been over to the hospital to see to the field-chests."

"Weren't you in here just now?" asked Kenyon.

"I? No! Not for ten minutes."

"Well, some one was here,—up-stairs and down both. I called twice and got no answer, but I saw a man and heard the steps. Thought it was you."

"Rolfe, perhaps. He was in the road just beyond our gate as I came back; but I thought he had just come from his company quarters."

"If it had been Rolfe he would have answered, I should think," said Kenyon. "Besides, the figure and the footsteps were those of a much lighter man."

"Queer!" said Holden, his thoughts instantly reverting to the event of the week before. "Did you see him?"

"I saw a figure pass across the light streaming from the sitting-room door. Then I heard the step up-stairs while I stood in your room, and then very quick, light steps on the stairs,—some one coming down like a streak, now that I think of it."

"How long ago?"

"Not more than a minute before you got here."

"By Jove, I'm going to look into this!" said Holden, quickly. "Of course you've heard of the excitement we had here. Bring that candle, will you? I'll take the lamp." Up the stairs they went,—up to the landing where Nita Guthrie had her mysterious fright and fall. The door of the room she occupied was open. All was darkness within. Holden, followed by Kenyon, entered, and they set their lights upon a table. The side window was shut and barred, the south windows as firmly closed. Everything looked neat and undisturbed, but cold and deserted. No sign of an intruder, for a moment, to the eyes of either man. Then of a sudden Holden made a spring for the toilet table, seized a small silver frame, and stood glaring at it.

"By Jove! look here!"

"What's the matter?" asked Kenyon.

"Don't you see?" was the answer, as the doctor held the face of the frame towards him, empty and gaping. "Nita Guthrie's photograph was in this frame and on that table just before the hop began when I was up here; and where is it now?"

VI.

Pallid and wan the first faint gleam of the coming day was stealing slowly into the eastern skies. Far away down the broad valley the mist was creeping from the slow-moving, silent stream. Peace and slumber and solitude hovered over the wide acres where the tasselled corn had waved in the summer breeze and the bearded rye and bristling wheat had ripened and bleached under the fervid touch of the summer sun. In the barn-yards and sheds the cattle still crouched, drowsing and huddling for warmth. In the orchards and among the maples and beeches the bluebirds and jays and belated robins still perched among the autumn leaves, their heads tucked away under sheltering wings. Under dew-laden hedge-rows the mother bird nestled her little brown brood, and Bob White still dozed away the dark hour that precedes the

awn. All over the placid, populous valley without the reservation nes, the wings of night were spread. All through the streets of the riving county town only the tread of the watchman waked the echoes, nly the glimmer of his lamp was seen. The waning moon, a dim, mist-edraggled crescent, had peeped up over the shadowy forest down the stward valley and climbed slowly towards a sheltering bank of cloud nd there had seemed to halt and hide. Puffing and panting, a long, ong train had wound under the wooded bluffs and was hissing at the ation platform at the foot of the curving road that led to the broad lateau of the fort. And now lights were dancing and gleaming every-where along the train; men in cavalry overcoats and top-boots were busily, rapidly, silently leading horse after horse up the wooden ramps or chutes and into the dark depths of the cattle-cars. Many a trooper stopped a moment after lashing his halter-strap to the rail and murmured a few caressing, reassuring words to his wondering charger, patting him on neck or shoulder, and striving to explain to him how it happened that he was stirred out from his warm stable at this unseemly hour and marched into a prison-pen on wheels behind those black, hissing monsters up ahead. Silence and order and discipline prevailed. Only when some excitable, nervous steed balked and refused to climb the chute, was there unusual sound. Then the sharp crack of the stable sergeant's whip and a stern "Hup there!" brought the brute to his senses, and he plunged along up the wooden ramp, his iron-shod hoofs thundering on the boards, his trooper's arms nearly wrenched from their sockets. The division superintendent had been better than his word, for it was only four o'clock when the train came hissing in, and in ten minutes, in long ghostly procession, Rolfe's men were leading their chargers, curveting and prancing in the keen air, down the winding road to the valley, the quartermaster's wagons following with chest and box and bale and bundles of tentage and camp equipage. In fifteen minutes more the word went up to send down the next troop, and the train pulled forward four car-lengths, so as to bring the next lot of horse-cars opposite the platform and chutes, while Thorpe's handsome sorrels were led wondering from the dimly-lighted gangway; and so, by a few minutes after five, even the officers' chargers and the spare horses of the first battalion were all aboard, and somewhere across the stream, just as the major acknowledged the report "All aboard and secure, sir," in Hazlett's soldierly tones, a sprightly chanticleer, whose ears had at last caught those muffled sounds of hoof and voice over

under the garrison bluffs, concluded it time to challenge, and woke the echoes with shrill cock-a-doodle-doo, whereat there came a low chuckle of delight from Hazlett's men.

"Very good, sir. Now get aboard all your baggage as quick as you can."

"All aboard now, sir."

"Then march up to quarters for coffee and breakfast,—the others are at theirs now,—and form under arms right afterwards."

Precious little sleep has there been this night,—no time among the men, no inclination among the women. Wives and daughters who had devoutly thanked heaven that only the first battalion was to go were soon undeceived, and found that but ten hours' respite was to be theirs. All the night long the note of preparation could be heard in barracks and in quarters. The colonel, with his adjutant and quartermaster, hardly left the office at all. Berrien bustled from barracks to his home, from there to stables. At two o'clock, finding all his own campaigning-kit in perfect readiness, and Winifred and her mother still huddling over the parlor fire, he noted the pallor in his daughter's face, the deep trouble in her pathetic eyes, and, taking her in his arms, he kissed her fondly again and again.

"Go to your room now, little daughter," he said, huskily: "go, dear, and try to sleep. I will not leave without coming to say bye-bye, just as I always did." She shivered and hid her face and clung to his neck, saying no word, shedding no tear. Gently he unclasped her hands. "Yes, my child, do as I bid you now: I want to speak with mother awhile." And then reluctantly she turned, but the one brief look into his eyes was so full of wordless sorrow that he was for an instant unmanned. "My little girl! my little Winnie! don't look at your old daddy that way!" he almost sobbed, as again he threw his arm around her, leading her to the stairs. "We won't be gone long. We're all coming back, dear; and we'll have a lovely Christmas, and you shall have the jolliest kind of a party, pet. But be a brave little woman now. It—it'll all come right." She turned with quick convulsive sob and threw herself upon his breast, again twining her soft arms about his neck, her beautiful dark hair streaming in rippling, shimmering masses down over the creamy white wrapper. The burst of tears would have been a blessed relief, but it never came. A quick, soldierly tread was heard on the plank walk without, and then springing up the steps. Even before the rat-tat-tat at the door she had torn

rself from his arms, and sped like startled fawn up the carpeted ir.

"It is Mr. Brewster," said Mrs. Berrien, in low tone, quickly. rrien threw open the door. "Anything for a pretext to come here ain," he muttered angrily to himself, as he confronted the unwelcome ruder. It *was* Brewster.

"Major Berrien, the colonel's compliments, and he desires you to ow that the train will be here at four instead of five." And Brew-r's eyes glanced but an instant into those of his superior, and then nt wandering longingly over his shoulder.

"I had already heard it, sir. You have everything ready?"

"I beg pardon, then, for disturbing you, major. I have just left e colonel, and he thought you might not have heard. Yes, sir, every-ing will be ready, though the rations are not yet cooked."

"Then be ready to get your horses aboard the moment F has ished loading. Anything else, Mr. Brewster?" Poor fellow, there as something else,—something that filled heart and soul and domi-ted every thought. Gazing wistfully up the stairs, his sad eyes had ught one glimpse of that white, fleeting form, one glimpse of the vely pallid face all framed in dark, falling tresses, as, clinging to the alustrade, Winifred turned, unable to resist the longing to hear what e might have to say.

"Nothing—nothing more, I believe, sir." And, mechanically rais-g his hand in salute, poor Curly turned away, the door promptly osing behind him.

Berrien came back into the parlor clenching his fists, speechless dignation in his face. Mrs. Berrien saw the unmistakable signs, and, ough in her heart she felt full of sympathy for Brewster, she knew best to say nothing now.

"If I thought it as you said," he hoarsely spoke at last,—"if I ought that fellow had been trifling with Winnie while all the time rrying on this—— Faugh! it makes me feel as though I could rottle him!" And Berrien strode up and down the cosey room, eating one brawny fist into the palm of the other hand.

"But, Richard dear, why do you think there has been anything erious between him and this—this woman? I think she deliberately ssumed that manner at the hop to-night. I think she called him Carroll' solely for Winifred's benefit and mine. I saw how astonished nd annoyed he was."

But Berrien held up a warning hand. "She came down the stairs weeping and he striving to soothe her. She was sobbing aloud when he put her in the carriage. Rolfe and I both saw and heard. Don't tell me there wasn't anything between them. Very possibly he does want to make up to Winifred now, but, damn him! he shan't. I won't have her degraded by any such offer, if I have to send her and you to Europe to get her away from him. It is no imagination, Bess: I tell you I know. Why, only this morning she sent him a new picture of herself; and as for calling him Carroll for our benefit, that's what she calls him in her letters, and I can prove it."

"How, Dick?"

"Rolfe saw it,—saw it this very morning."

"Captain Rolfe! Why, how came he to see her letter to him?"

"Well, it was lying open on his desk: he could not help seeing."

"Why, Dick, I cannot understand Captain Rolfe's looking at or reading other people's letters, and——"

"It was an accident, I tell you."

"Ah, but it was no accident his telling of it, Dick. Nothing on earth should have induced him to refer to it, if, as he claims, he saw it by accident. I did not suppose Rolfe would do such a thing."

"Well, he couldn't help himself. I dragged it out of him, I suppose."

Another step, another rap at the door, and, casting one glance aloft, Berrien, to his dismay, again caught sight of Winifred's pale face peering over the balustrade. The child could not, would not rest.

"What's wanted?" he curtly asked, as he threw open the door.

"It is Sergeant Ellis, sir," said a deep voice. "I have come to beg the major to intercede for me. My troop goes with the major's battalion, and I begged to be relieved and allowed to go; but the quartermaster says I must stay until some sergeant can be found who is competent to take charge,—some one in the infantry battalion. That may require two or three days, sir, and I am fearful that once the command gets away there will be no obtaining orders to follow it. Besides, sir, there is my horse."

"You belong to the black troop?"

"Yes, sir, and I think that if the major would but speak to Major Kenyon at once he could name a sergeant who would take my place here at the fire-house. Almost any man can do it, sir; only there is no time to be lost. Major Kenyon is at the doctor's now."

"Dr. Holden's?"

"Yes, sir, and Captain Rolfe has just joined him there."

"Have you spoken to Lieutenant Brewster? He commands your troop, as you know, now that the captain's away."

"I have, sir, but it was at the office, and the quartermaster spoke up at once, so that Lieutenant Brewster could do nothing."

Berrien turned back into the parlor. "Bess, dear, I must run over to Holden's a moment. Will you not go up to Winifred? She is not lying down at all."

Followed by the sergeant, Berrien entered Holden's gate and gave a whack at the open hall door as he passed in. Rolfe's voice was the first thing he heard. It was tremulous with excitement.

"If Colonel Farquhar will but give me authority to search one room in this post, I will guarantee that I can find that picture and name the thief——" He broke off short at sight of Berrien. Holden rose, hospitably urging the major to join them in a cup of coffee, but Berrien proceeded at once to business.

"Major Kenyon, a sergeant of my battalion is in charge of the fire-apparatus here, but is most anxious to go with us. He says it will be allowed if you can name one of your men—a non-commissioned officer—to take his place at once. You will do me a very great favor if you will."

"Certainly I can," answered Kenyon, stoutly. "Is your man there? Call him in. Sergeant Griggs, of B company, will be just the man, and I know his company commander will make no objection."

"Come in here, sergeant," called Berrien, and, cap in hand, the dark-eyed, dark-haired trooper, on whose lip the moustache was again beginning to bristle, stood silently before them.

"Are you well enough to go, my man?" spoke up Holden on the instant. "You look very pale, if not ill."

"I am perfectly well, doctor, and I am eager to go. I suppose I'm a little cold and excited."

"Then give my compliments to the quartermaster at once and say Sergeant Griggs, of the infantry, will take your duty," said Kenyon, quietly.

Ellis muttered, "Thank you, sir," faced about, and hurried from the room.

"Was that man in the hall when I was talking and you came in?" asked Rolfe, in his quick, decided way.

"I don't know," answered Berrien, surprised. "I think he followed me up the steps and was standing at the door."

"Why do you ask, Rolfe?" queried Holden, closely studying his face.

"Because, if he was, the search I spoke of would now be useless."

VII.

Daylight at last, but the sun is hidden in banks of dripping mist. Daylight, wan and chill and comfortless, and the bleary lamps still smoke and flicker about the parade. Daylight, yet without one spark of gladness. Even the birds huddle in the shelter of the autumn foliage, now so crisp and brown, and not so much as a chirp is heard. All around the big quadrangle night-lamps are still aglow within the shaded windows, telling of sleepless vigil, of pallid cheeks and tear-dimmed eyes. Only in the barracks of the men or the lively dens of the bachelor subalterns do the windows blaze, uncurtained, undismayed. There no silently-weeping wives, no clinging, sobbing little ones, crying "because mamma cries," yet little dreaming for what cause, no thought of "What will come to these should I never return?" daunt the spirit of the soldier. There all voices are ringing with eagerness, even exultation, as the men brace on their woven cartridge-belts and toss over their brawny shoulders carbine-slings and the straps of canteen and haversack, and then come streaming forth upon the galleries, muffled to the chin in the blue cavalry overcoats. Out on the parade the trumpeters are gathered under the moist folds of the flag, awaiting the signal to sound "assembly;" and now the band comes marching in through the morning mist, and the adjutant strides forth from the office door. Merrily, briskly the stirring peal bursts from the bells of the brazen trumpets. Promptly the blue overcoats leap into ranks. Sharply they face to the left, and the stern voices of the sergeants can be heard calling the rolls,—the "here," "here," of the men responding in animation and hilarity sometimes so marked as to call forth a frown of rebuke. The troop commanders and their subalterns have hastened to their company grounds. The major has just come forth from his dimly-lighted hall and is joined by the colonel at the gate, and now, slowly, these two are pacing out to the parade. On many of the *verandas dim feminine* forms, mantled in heavy shawl or cloak, have

thered in the gloom. Some can be seen flitting ghost-like through
e mist, seeking comfort and sympathy in the society of a near
ighbor equally bereaved. Brewster turns one longing glance at the
rch of the major's quarters, but no one is there. Again, quick and
irited as though defying the elements, the trumpets peal the adju-
nt's call; the band bursts into the martial rhythm of lively quick-
ep, and then the dripping, moisture-laden morning air rings with
e words of command, as, in full ranks, the four troops come swing-
g out upon the turf and all the roadway around the parade fills up
ith other light blue overcoats, those of troopers and footmen who
ish with all their hearts it was their turn to go, that they, too,
elonged to the first battalion. In a moment the line is formed; the
rbines snap into the bared left hands as arms are presented; Berrien
aves the colonel's side and takes post in front of the centre, touches
is cap in acknowledgment of the salute, and whips out his own
attle-worn blade. No speech-making here. "Right forward, fours
ght!" rings the order, and then, arms at right shoulder, band and
umpeters leading, Berrien's men, with quick, elastic step, with swing
nd life and jauntiness in every stride, march square away across the
arade, heading for the road in front of Farquhar's quarters. The
umpets strike up their merry, lively peal. With one simultaneous
rash the carbines are brought to the carry, and Berrien lowers his
abre in salute to the gray-haired colonel, whose eyes fill and who bares
or the moment his handsome head as he notes the spirited bearing of
he men. And now the head of column has reached the road and
urns to the left; and now the trumpets cease and the full band bursts
nto martial song, and all along the row women are waving handker-
hiefs wet with tears, even though many are sobbing as though their
earts would break, and little children are perched on the gallery rail-
ngs, shouting in shrill treble their good-by to papa, who turns one
rief glance, perhaps the very last on earth, and a big lump rises in
many a husky throat, and stern eyes are dimmed with unwonted tears,
nd God alone knows the secret thoughts that go surging through the
oldier brain, the never-ceasing whisper of that still, small voice,
What—what will be their fate if I am taken?" God alone can hear,
od alone can know the humility, the piteous pleading, in the muttered
rayer that floats to Him on high, "Oh, guard and protect them, and,
it be thy will, in thy good time restore the father to his helpless
ttle ones." Ah, it is one thing to go forth to fight for an imperilled

country, for an insulted flag, to stake life and fortune and hope to guard the beloved ones at the fireside, and to feel that one is battling for them, for their honor, peace, and future prosperity. But it is a thing far different to be torn from loving arms and the smiles and sunshine in the little faces, the prattling and kisses of baby lips, to face year after year a savage foe, knowing full well that, defeated, only death can be the soldier's fortune, that, victorious, the only reward will be permission to slink back to the station whence one came. It is the conquered Indian who rides in triumph to the nation's capital and learns how great and good a thing it is to take the war-path every other year. It is all well enough for the young officers, the young troopers, to laugh and cheer. It is the husband and father among the seniors, the old campaigner in the rank and file,—men who have been through many and many a bloody fight within some twenty years of national peace and prosperity,—men who have seen dozens, hundreds, of their cherished comrades slaughtered in battle with the Sioux,—it is they who see the other side of the picture, and ask, "To what purpose? To what end?" Outbreak has followed outbreak, campaign has succeeded campaign, each marked by bitter losses in many a regiment, each swelling the list of the widowed and the fatherless, each terminated by the final surrender of hostile bands satiated with the summer's slaughter and shrewd enough to know that they have only to wave the white rag of submission to be restored to public confidence and double rations. Step aside now, gentlemen of the army, bury your dead, patch up your wounds, go back to your stations, and get ready for another shindy in the spring. You have had your annual outing, the Indian only his first innings. Now comes his second. Now the Bureau takes hold, and away go the prominent leaders of the red revolt in the annual pilgrimage, the annual starring tour through the East, and the sentimentalists swarm to meet them, and wheresoever they stop hosts of our fellow-citizens throng to smile upon them, eager to clasp and shake the hands that, less than a month ago, were reeking with the blood of mutilated soldiery for whom desolate women and bereaved little ones are wailing hopelessly to-day. *Væ victis!* Go on in your triumphal circuit, red brothers Rain-in-the-Face, Thunder-Bear, Blizzard Hawk. Rejoice in the sunshine of your prosperity; go back to your new lodges and unload your chests of plunder, the free-will offerings of your pale-faced kindred. The war has made you rich. Your squaws and children revel in food and finery galore; and should

upplies begin to slacken up a little with the coming of another spring, hoot your agent, carry off his wife and daughters, and start in for nother summer of fun. As for you, weeping widow and children of Captain Something,—I've forgotten his name,—shot from ambush by he Sioux last fall, get back to the East as best you can, dry your tears, nd be happy on twenty dollars a month. It's what one must expect n marrying into the army.

And now the last of the blue column has passed through the western gate, and a throng of comrades surges after, every man in the garrison, not otherwise on duty, trudging down through the mist and mud to see Berrien's battalion to the waiting train. The guard springs to arms and falls in line,—the guard whom Brewster was to have relieved at eight A.M.,—and again the major lowers his sabre in acknowledgment of their salute, and so, down the winding road, tramp, tramp, steadily, cheerily, even joyously, they go, and the broad parade above is silent and deserted. Women are sobbing in one another's arms, and Mrs. Berrien, seated at an upper window looking out to the west, is stroking Winifred's glossy, rippling tresses,—Winifred, who, kneeling, has buried her tear-stained face in her mother's lap. Fainter and fainter the martial strains come floating up from the wooded valley. The band is playing another quickstep now, its prelude full of vim and life and spirit, and then—— What strange inspiration has possessed the leader? Listen! listen! Winifred raises her head and looks one instant with dilated eyes into her mother's pallid, quivering face; then, covering her ears with her slender hands, burrowing again into her mother's lap, she bursts into a passion of tears. Listen! Sweet, soft, sad, the beautiful notes of the thrice beautiful old song are wafted up on the gentle breeze. God! to how many a breaking heart, how many a world-worn, weary, yearning soul, has it not spoken!—

Love not, love not, ye hapless sons of clay.

It is too much for Mrs. Berrien. Brave, self-controlled, uncomplaining as she has been through it all, this is test beyond her strength. Down comes the window with sudden clash, and then, drawing her daughter to her breast, clasping her in her loving, sheltering arms, the mother heart gives way, the sorrowing wife bows her head, and, rocking to and fro in wordless grief, mingles her tears with those of her beloved child.

Cheer upon cheer comes swelling on the morning air. Cheer follows cheer as Berrien's men return the soul-stirring, soldierly good-by. Guidons wave from the thronging platforms. Bronzed faces peer from every window. Hats and forage-caps are tossing on high. Men rush alongside the slowly-starting train for one last hand-clasp of the departing comrades. The echoes ring to the rollicking notes of their old charging, fighting tune. The trumpets answer from the crowded cars. The sun bursts through the eddying mist and streams in glorious radiance upon the scene. All here at the station throbs with soldier song and spirit and enthusiasm; but above—above, where in mournful premonition one poor army wife is weeping over three little curly heads pillowed in her straining arms, there comes no sound of soldier triumph, no echo of soldier song. Sunshine and stirring music follow the swiftly-speeding train, but all is dark and desolate now where gladness reigned but a day gone by.

VIII.

Letters from the front! What joy and comfort they bring!—for every writer seems bent on convincing the anxious ones at home that there is no danger and little discomfort, after all. Telegrams and brief notes have been raining in ever since the departure of the regiment, but now the two battalions are reunited under Farquhar's command; they have got shaken down into a species of winter cantonment with a goodly number of comrade troops and troopers from the threatened department. The weather has not been unusually severe thus far. Men and horses stood the trip admirably, and nobody growled at stiffened fingers and red noses and benumbed feet as they rode in long column from the railway to the agency, and, now that fuel has been lugged up in abundance and fur caps and "blizzard coats" are coming and the Indians hovering about the camps seem deeply impressed with the numbers and readiness of the white soldiers and all promises well, the letters grow longer and more frequent.

"We are doing first-rate, Bess dear," wrote Berrien, "and all are hopeful that with the surrounding of the big band of hostiles in the Bad River Valley the most uncertain feature of the business is at an end. If they can be quietly herded in to the reservation and induced

give up all their arms and ponies, there will be no further trouble. he health and spirit of the regiment is excellent, and, while I hope) emergency will arise, I can bet that if there should be a shindy the welfth will give good account of itself. Farquhar keeps us on the ert, and there is no rusting. Gorham has joined from leave: so iat Brewster, to his infinite disgust I doubt not, has had to fall back) second place. He and Rolfe are about the only gloomy spirits in ie command, and of Brewster I see very little. Ever since the epi- ode of which I told you and her most significant appearance at the épôt in town while we were being switched to the north-bound track . have not felt like having anything to do with him. How do you uppose she heard of our move, since she left the hop before any one new of it? There were a few other ladies there, I admit, for they were still with us when the orders came, and it had cleared by the time we reached the dépôt. She, however, seemed to hang on to him, and nobody else, to the very last. I am distressed at what you tell me about Winifred, and the more I think of it the more I am disposed to urge your instant acceptance of Miss Guthrie's invitation. It will be the very best antidote I know of,—a few weeks in St. Louis society,—if she has indeed, as you fear, become interested in him. Go by all means; it will do you good,—do Winifred a world of good (get her some new gowns, and take in all the parties and all the gayety you possibly can); and it will be a good thing for Miss Guthrie, too.

"Now, this is strictly *entre nous*. Holden is worried about her, and in course of a long talk we had last night he showed me a letter just received from Mrs. Holden. Of course she is all upset by his having to take the field, and wants to leave the children with her mother and come up here to him, but she couldn't be in camp, and there isn't a room to be had at the railway-station. The place is just crammed with newspaper men and quartermaster's people. Mrs. Holden writes that ever since the night of that queer adventure of hers at the fort, Nita has been unlike herself,—strange, nervous, almost hysterical at times. She will permit no allusion to it, and seems striving to forget it all. She goes everywhere, morning, noon, and night, but looks haggard and ill. I gather from what Holden said that, as you once surmised, there was an old affair which may have had something to do with her persistent refusal of every offer; but what that could have had to do with her fright at Pawnee I cannot imagine. Holden agrees with me, however, that it would be a capital thing if

you and Winnie would pay her the visit she urges: so again I say, go by all means.

"By the way, I wish you would run over and see Mrs. Thorpe as often as you can. Her letters have a depressing effect on the captain. He tells me the only insurance he has in all the world is in the Army Mutual; but three thousand dollars would hardly pay their debts and take care of them for a year, if anything were to happen to him. Don't be alarmed by newspaper stories of the lighted skies and howling ghost-dancers. Indians will dance all night on any provocation, and our fires light the skies quite as much as theirs. Sergeant Ellis, who volunteered to push through with despatches to Buller's command somewhere on the other side of the Bad Lands, got back all right this morning, and says he had hardly any difficulty in working a way through the hostiles. That fellow, I think, is going to make a name for himself in this campaign. He is always ready for anything that turns up.

"I hear that Brewster and Ridgeway have had a row and do not speak. Some of the boys know what it's all about, but won't tell me. Do you know? Now, unless you wire to the contrary, I shall address my next care of Hon. Warren L. Guthrie, St. Louis."

Then Kenyon got a letter. He was now commanding officer of the post, and was unremitting in his thoughtfulness and attention to the households of the absent officers. It was Rolfe who wrote to him, and Kenyon was well-nigh at his wits' end in the endeavor to conjecture what it all meant:

"You remember my saying I could find that stolen picture if I could but have authority to search one room at the post. It is my conviction still that the man who goes by the name of Ellis was the thief. He had a lock-box at the post-office in town, No. 23, and letters have been forwarded to him here by the postmaster two of which were not addressed to Sergeant Ellis or to G. B. Ellis, Twelfth Cavalry, but to Ralph Erroll, Box 23. When he returned from detached service this morning the sergeant-major handed him his mail and asked him if those additional letters were his. He turned red, then pale, but said yes. Both these were from Louisville, as I happen to know; both were addressed in the same hand,—that of an educated woman; and there is no doubt in my mind that this Ellis, or Erroll, has a screw loose in his record. Brewster knows something of his past, but *refuses to tell. It is of* vital importance to me to find out who and

hat he is, for I believe him to have been guilty of a crime beside hich the theft of that picture is as nothing.

"Now, I want you to do something for me. A man will call on u within a few days, presenting a letter of introduction from me. e is a detective from Chicago. He has certain inquiries to make at e post and in town before going to Louisville, and it should not be nown that he is a detective at all. Give him every facility in your wer. Introduce him to the postmaster as a friend of mine, if you efer it, and let him occupy my quarters while at the garrison. He ill want to see the fire-house and apparatus and all about Holden's arters. Kathleen is there in charge, and Holden has no objection, ough he pooh-poohs the efforts I am making to get at the bottom of is strange business. I hope I am not asking too much of you.

"I saw Hearn last evening, just in from a ten days' scout with ane's squadron over towards the Wakpa Shicha. He asked after you nd sent cordial regards. There are two other fellows here who were n their honeymoon tour when their regiments were ordered to the eld. It reconciles one to being a bachelor, almost."

The major put the letter down and pondered long, perplexed and nnoyed. He had known Rolfe but a short time, and had learned to now him mainly through Holden. He knew him to be resolute, ositive, even aggressive at times. He admired his soldierly qualities nd respected his ability. But when finally he rose from his desk fter stowing that letter away, old Kenyon expressed himself about as follows: "That fellow *needs* a wife; he is too much accustomed to having his own way. I'll be hanged if I'll do any detective work for him or anybody else. If Holden wants his house searched, Holden an say so."

Two days later the major had the mournful pleasure of escorting Mrs. and Miss Berrien to the train, and as it steamed away eastward a man who had stepped from the day car as Kenyon placed his fair charges on the sleeper came forward and handed him a note addressed in Rolfe's characteristic hand.

"I know who you are," said Kenyon. "You will find me at my office in the garrison when you get up there." And, stepping into the waiting wagon, he bade the driver go ahead, leaving the detective to come up in the post stage.

That evening he wrote a short letter to Rolfe, and the gentleman from Chicago indited *a long one*,—both of which would have served

to surprise that calmly superior soldier not a little had they reached him in due course of mail, which, however, they did not. It was some time before he saw them at all, for when they were unloaded from the mail-bags at the wintry cantonment, Rolfe, with Berrien's battalion, was miles away.

Getting no reply to his missives and little encouragement at the post, the strange civilian suddenly departed, after three days' apparently aimless stay, and the next heard of him was in the shape of a letter from Louisville. Could Major Kenyon procure for him, anyhow anywhere, a photograph of Sergeant Ellis? No, Major Kenyon couldn't, and was very short in saying so.

And now December was come, and the air was crisp and keen in the valley of the Pawnee, the sunshine radiant and sparkling; but far to the north the wintry winds were howling about the flimsy cantonment and whirling the snow through every cranny and crack, and the long nights on outpost and picket were bitter cold. But, through it all, the various battalions of horse were sent scouting in turn around the reservation, and more and more the young warriors dribbled away from the agencies and were next heard of welcomed with acclamations by the savage hosts in the fastnesses of the Bad Lands, and every hour increased the prospect of sharp fighting in the near future. But all the letters to the anxious hearts at home were full of hope and cheer, full of prophecy that everything would soon be settled. The renegade bands were all "located" and being slowly hemmed in. The Twelfth would eat its Christmas dinner at Pawnee after all, they hoped. And in St. Louis Miss Guthrie was exerting herself to see that her charming guests were having the loveliest kind of a time. Dinners, luncheons, card-, theatre-, and dancing-parties followed in quick succession. The new gowns were being made as fast as famous modistes could evolve and construct them, and Winifred was rushed from one scene of gayety to another.

"Nothing could have been more charming than our welcome," wrote Mrs. Berrien to her beloved Dick, "nothing more delightful than the round of entertainments to which we are bidden. One has hardly time to think. As for writing, this is the first opportunity I have enjoyed in three days, and we are home from the theatre but half an hour. Mrs. Holden comes over every day, and we exchange such news as we have of the dear old regiment and the dearer ones who are *our especial property*. She is what I call a *genuine* woman, and I like

her more and more. I must tell you something I learned through her. The day after our arrival we were in the library, and my attention was attracted by a large portrait, apparently a crayon copy of a photograph, that hung over the mantel. It was of a singularly handsome young man, and I knew at once he must be a Guthrie. 'It is my brother,' said Nita, in such a sad, constrained tone, 'taken just a few weeks before his death six years ago.' Of course I could ask no more, but Winifred and I both noted how utterly her face changed, how unspeakably distressed a look came into her eyes. We could see then why Mrs. Holden should have said she was haggard and ill; and yesterday Mrs. Holden told me something of his story. He was barely twenty-two, the idol of the family, and immensely popular in society. He was assistant cashier in one of the big banks here, and one day the sudden discovery was made that in some mysterious way quite a large sum was missing, money for which he was responsible, but he could not account for it, neither could anybody else. The matter was investigated thoroughly. They had detectives everywhere, and absolutely nothing could be brought up against young Guthrie. He never gambled, never dissipated in any way, was a model son and brother. Nita was wild with indignation at his having been even suspected. Mr. Guthrie offered to make good the sum twice over if need be and to bond himself for all his wealth to establish his boy's honor, and for three or four days all was excitement, and then, in the midst of it, poor Jack was found dead in his room, a half-empty bottle of chloral by his bedside. The world said suicide, guilty conscience, etc., but Nita and others knew that he had not slept a wink since the discovery of the loss and was crazed with misery. They have always maintained it was an accidental overdose. But it nearly broke Mr. Guthrie's heart, and it was three years before Nita would go into society in St. Louis again. They went to Europe, and stayed there ever so long.

"What makes it seem probable that he was unjustly suspected was that the bank dismissed its cashier, Jack's most intimate friend, a man two years older than himself, and a devoted admirer of Nita's. It was even supposed that she was engaged to him. He had no wealthy friends to stand up for him, and Jack's death made it appear as though there had been guilt; and yet such a sum could not well have been made away with except by the knowledge or collusion of the cashier himself, and, though proofs were lacking, he was discharged the very day poor Jack was buried. No one knows what ever became of him

afterwards, and people settled down into the belief that this Mr. Worden was the real thief. But now comes the strangest part of it all. The president of the bank was a widower who for two years had been a suitor of Nita's, a persistent suitor despite her marked coldness and aversion. Four months ago rumors began to float as to the stability of the bank; then came a run, a panic; the bank had to close its doors; immediate investigation into its affairs was made, and then came the discovery that the president had been a heavy speculator and had unquestionably used the funds of the bank to cover his losses. They found his body in the river four days afterwards, floating down by the old barracks where you and I had such a happy winter twenty years ago. People say now that it was President Percival himself all the time, and that he threw suspicion on young Guthrie because he knew the father would eagerly pay any sum to cover the loss and hide the shame, but Jack's death balked the scheme.

"Do you wonder now that Nita is sometimes overwrought and nervous? Poor girl! who knows what she has suffered? Who, to see her in society, would dream that she had ever suffered at all? Do you suppose Captain Rolfe did not hear all about this when he was here on recruiting service?

"Now you ask me to tell you everything about Winifred. Is she happy? Is she getting over her disappointment? I do not know just what to say. She is always bright and apparently joyous in society; always grateful for every kindness and attention shown her; but she is rarely alone one minute from morning until late at night, and I cannot be sure. She never speaks of him; and in all the whirl of social gayety here, and the attention she receives on every side, I think, I hope, she may forget her girlish sentiment. Time will show."

Time might have shown, but time was not accorded. Coming home late one night from a delightful dance, their carriage stopped outside the massive *porte-cochère* of the Guthrie homestead instead of driving right in.

"What is it, James?" asked Miss Guthrie.

"Another carriage here, miss. I think it is Mrs. Holden just getting out."

"Jennie here! Why, how odd! She went home half an hour before we started."

It was Jennie, with a grave, anxious face, at sight of which Mrs. Berrien fairly sprang from the carriage.

"You have ill news, Mrs. Holden. What is it? Tell me at nce."

"This has just come from my husband," was the trembling answer s she held forth a telegram: "Major Berrien's wound serious, but not fatal. Mrs. Berrien must not be alarmed. Do not believe sensational newspaper reports of disaster. Wounded doing well."

IX.

Pursuant to his orders, Major Berrien with his battalion of the Twelfth had been scouting the open country that lay to the northeastward of the cantonment. So alarming had the situation become, so significant if not actually defiant was the manner of the Indians whose lodges were pitched all over the prairie around the agency, that the ommanding general had caused intrenchments to be thrown up on very ridge overlooking that threatened settlement. Additional troops, ncluding a strong force of infantry and detachments of light artillery, ad been sent to the scene. Hotchkiss and field guns were placed in osition commanding the Indian camp, and night and day the earthworks were heavily manned and sentries and outposts guarded every pproach. Meantime, the main body of the hostiles was still ghostancing and howling through the wintry night far over to the north mong the breaks and chasms of the Bad Lands, so strong in numbers nd so secure from assault within the lines of their natural fortress as o laugh to scorn all premonition of disaster. Runners had gone to very tribe urging concerted action and united revolt. Every day rought new accessions, and all that was needed to enable them to bid lefiance to the encircling force was the arrival of the great bands that ad broken away from the reservations along the Missouri, followers nd would-be avengers of the old chieftain Sitting Bull, who had died n harness, a rebel to the last. Brulé and Ogallalla, Uncpapa and Minneconjou, here were the warriors, reinforced by many a new-grown on, who had fought the white soldiers summer after summer, time and gain, in the bloody days of the decade past,—the Brulés especially, nce restrained by the wisdom of old Sintogaliska, now ripe for any eviltry and well-nigh unanimous for war to the knife.

Without noteworthy incident, Berrien's command had circled around o the east of the sacred lines of the reservation, had spent a day or

two exploring the breaks and ravines of a dozen little streams flowing into the Wakpa Washtay, had located trail after trail of travois-, pony-, and lodge-pole-tracks, had scoured the wide valley of the main stream, but without sight of a single warrior, much less a war-party. The still smoking ruins of two ranches told, however, of recent visitation, and the hoof-marks of cattle mingling with the pony-tracks pointed unerringly whither the spoil had been driven. Meantime, while nothing could be seen of the wily red man, every hour gave new proof that their own movements were closely observed. Signal-smokes went puffing skyward on almost every side, and the night sentries declared that twice just before dawn of two successive mornings they had dimly seen shadowy horsemen darting over the neighboring ridges and had heard the thud of nimble hoofs. Even in the faded gray of the bunch-grass, even on the hard, frozen ground, experienced eyes could find corroboration of the story. Daring Indian scouts were ever on their flanks and front and rear, making no overt move against them, but keeping the hostile camp fully informed of everything that was being done and watching restlessly for opportunity to cut off every straying charger, to cut down every straggling man. Knowing all this full well, Berrien had given strict orders,—neither officer nor trooper was permitted to leave the column by day nor the bivouac by night; and now, its mission accomplished, the column had started on return march, and up to this time no casualty had occurred. So long as the isolated battalion was moving towards the hostile camp, nearing every hour the overwhelming array of the enemy and separating itself farther and farther from friendly supports, no bar had been put to its progress. But now the Indian scouts could see that it was turning back, probably in the hope of regaining the cantonment unmolested.

It was a sunshiny December afternoon; the air was as clear as a bell, the clouds that obscured the eastern sky at dawn had long since drifted out of sight, and in all its broad expanse the pale-blue vault of the heavens wore not so much as a feather of vapor. Who that rode in the laughing, chatting, jaunty column that sparkling day could realize the change a few hours might effect on the silent, breezeless solitudes around them? At noon the sun was so warm that many a trooper had stripped off his heavy overcoat and turned up the flaps of the rough fur cap. Except in deep ravines or *coulées*, hardly any snow was to be seen. The dull gray surface of the rolling prairie, wave after wave, lay basking, and the leafless branches of the cottonwoods overhanging the

rozen pools were glistening, sparkling, in the life-giving rays. The dvance-guard, after breaking the ice and treating their horses to a nouthful of water at the stream, had moved on at brisk trot, and now he stalwart riders were spreading out in extended order as they breasted he slope. Out to the west, full five hundred yards, the wary flankers ould be seen, some crossing the stream farther down the valley, while ther comrades peered over the barren ridge behind, that no sneaking foe might crawl up unobserved and send a long-range bullet from its shelter down into the swarm of troopers at the ford. So, too, the flankers to the east and the sturdy little knot of rear-guardsmen just popping up over the divide so recently crossed, all told of ceaseless vigilance on every side. Berrien has not ridden the Sioux trail a score of years for nothing. He takes no chances where the security of his command is concerned, and has small opinion of the leader who subjects them to needless risk.

And now one after another the four troops ride into close column on the northward bank; the men dismount, unsaddle, and presently, with side-lines in hand, each trooper leading his faithful steed, the four herds are guided to the separate grazing-grounds already chosen and "pre-empted" by wide-awake subalterns or sergeants. There the side-lines are carefully adjusted, the bridles slipped off, three or four men remain in saddle as herd-guard, and the horses are left to graze. Rich with nutriment is that crisp, dry bunch-grass,—rich and plentiful. The mules of the pack-train bray with impatience to shed their loads and join their envied four-footed comrades; but presently they too, following the bell, are streaming out upon the guarded prairie, rolling in luxury upon the frosty earth and kicking their legs in air in genuine delight. From a dozen little fires among the bare-limbed cottonwoods the thin smoke is curling aloft, and the rattle of tin cup and plate and the jovial voices of the men seem to clamor for their soldier rations. In long rows the saddles and equipments are aligned upon the turf, each man's carbine and belt at his saddle. Huge rolls of robes and blankets are unstrapped and spread to air, and all this time, while the troop-officers are looking to the comfort and security of their horses, Major Berrien, followed by a single orderly, is riding about from point to point to satisfy himself that the guards are stationed where best they can secure the bivouac against surprise.

The ridge to the southwest is higher than those which limit the view at other points, and thither Berrien is now riding at easy lope.

Rolfe and Hazlett, watching him for a moment, exchange an appreciative nod as they hear from the group of soldiers at the nearest campfire some brawny son of the old sod remark, "Just luck at the ould man now; sure it's a smart red-skin that will ever get through the pickets he posts." Not since the days of old "Major Slowtrot," old "Pap" Thomas, has there been a battalion commander better loved by the rank and file. They know nothing will ever induce him to forget one precaution for their safety, and reward his care with a loyalty of devotion good to see. Watching him still further, Hazlett notes that a distant vedette has signalled, and that Berrien, slowly now, is riding up the slope to join him. A sergeant has some question to ask at the moment, and when Hazlett again looks out to the southwest, major, orderly, and vedette have disappeared from view around a little shoulder of bluff. Other vedettes can be seen at their posts on all sides, and a few dismounted sentries lying prone where, unseen themselves, they can scan the country to their front. But Hazlett's curiosity is excited by the fact that two men, mere specks in the distance, are huddling together at the crest half a mile away to the southwest and evidently watching something out at their front and motioning to the sergeant back with the supports. Presently this trooper, too, trots out to join them. Berrien and his party are still out of sight from camp.

"Captain, may I borrow your field-glasses?" asks Mr. Brewster, swinging up to the fire where Hazlett stands. "I have lent mine to the sergeant of the guard."

"Did you see where the major went?" asks Hazlett by way of reply, as he hands the desired instrument.

"I last saw him at the point yonder. He rode around it with Sergeant Ellis and a couple of men, and that vedette must have been calling to him. It seems to me they've been gone some time: so Gorham says I can ride out and find out what it means."

"I'd go with you, Brewster, but my horse is out at herd. Take the glasses with you, anyhow." Brewster's big black is led up at the moment, and the lieutenant quickly mounts and canters easily away.

Meantime, old Berrien, who has noted the signals of the vedette referred to, has joined him, with the brief inquiry, "What is it, Scott?"

"Why, sir, I was posted here by the sergeant, and he had no sooner gone than I saw what I took to be horsemen in the valley

several miles out yonder to the southwest. The major can see the whole country from a butte that lies perhaps three hundred yards farther out beyond this ridge. But here comes the sergeant back, sir."

It is Ellis, cantering briskly from the advanced position Scott has designated, and coming to them now around the shoulder of the bluff a little to the right. That Ellis has seen something is evident; his face shows it in an instant.

"An Indian war-party, major, perhaps a dozen, rode from behind a long ridge over to the west and down into the valley of what I take to be a branch of the Porcupine. That butte hides a good deal of the valley; but we can see it from there, though."

"You three men come with me," says Berrien, quietly. "We must look into this."

Two minutes' lope brings them to the butte Ellis has pointed out. Leaving their horses with the orderly, Berrien, the sergeant, and the sentinel go crouching up the hither slope, throw themselves on the ground, and crawl to the summit. As the vedette has said, the whole country for miles in every direction can be seen,—a country of bold contours, of bare, rounded bluffs and buttes, of deep, shadowy ravines and gulches,—a country bare of trees save the ghostly, leafless cotton-woods perched by the banks of many a frozen stream. Miles and miles to the north and northwest the wild Indian land spreads before their eyes. Close at hand, tumbling, billowy, and abrupt, the ridges follow or intercept one another in rapid succession. The face of the land is cut up into tortuous "breaks," the deep, narrow beds of count-less little streams, all winding tributary to the river that flows placidly away to the northeast in the broad valley from which the column marched at dawn. Beyond that, west of north, clearly, sharply defined in the distance, already alternating glaring surface and ghostly shade under the slanting rays of the westering sun, a tumbling mass of jagged, fantastic shapes, a tangle of vertical cliffs and seamed and fur-rowed walls, a labyrinth of gorges, gullies, washed-out channels, deep black crevices, and broad, yawning, impassable gulfs, the storied Bad Lands of Dakota, shunned by all except the renegade and outlaw in the past, now habitable only by the Indian. Beyond these, faint and dim in the distance, the snow-covered, pine-crested summits in the Black Hills. All the rest of the surface, east, west, and south, a frozen sea of gray, glinting here and there in the declining rays; and there off to the southwest, perhaps five miles away, lies the valley into

which the party of dusky warriors has galloped so short a time before, —the valley beyond which, a long, long day's march away, stands the guarded camp of comrade soldiery awaiting their return. Berrien studies the scene long and carefully through his glasses. Intermediate ridges are not many, but they are sharp and clearly defined.

"Who was it reported that the advance saw signal-smokes south of us at noon?" he asks.

"Corporal Waite, sir; he and two of the men saw them plainly, and they seemed to be answered off here." And Ellis points miles away to the west.

Berrien ponders a moment.

"Where away would you locate the agency, sergeant, if you were going to take a bee-line for it?"

"Out off here, sir."

"And they crossed that line going into the valley?"

"They certainly did, sir, and—— Look, major! look yonder! Another band, and from exactly the same place."

A little bevy of dark objects darts suddenly into view from behind a curtain-like divide and goes skimming over a level stretch towards the low lands of the valley. Berrien's glasses seem glued to his eyes.

"Twenty of them in that party! What do they see? What's their hurry? They would not expose themselves to our view unless there were urgent need for haste."

"The old road comes in from that direction, sir," answers Ellis. We left it a few hours out from the cantonment, as you remember. Can anything have been seen along that road to give rise to signal-smokes?"

Berrien turns half over and looks keenly into the sergeant's intelligent face.

"That road has been abandoned for weeks past. Everybody to the east of us has taken refuge at the railway long since. Nobody would be coming from that direction."

"I know that, sir; but would not any detachment coming from the agency to meet us, for instance, be apt to keep the road? I understood we were to strike for it in the morning and follow it in."

Again Berrien gazes long and earnestly through the binocular. "They are certainly heading for that road and riding at full speed. How many men have you at this front?" he quickly asks.

"Just eight, sir, all told, but eight more are almost within call

ver on our left flank. Yonder is the ridge where my men are posted." And Ellis points to their left rear where lies the low crest.

"Just keep a good lookout here, sergeant. I will move them over his way, and then ride to the left flank.—My horse, orderly." And, thinking deeply over the matter as he rides, Berrien spurs into a lively canter across an intervening dip in the prairie. "Some mischief ahead," he mutters. "They are not speeding up that valley for nothing. We may have to saddle and get over there."

Not two hundred yards has he ridden when from the point which he has just quitted there comes a sudden yell of warning, followed almost instantly by two shots in quick succession. Then bang! bang! another two, and, as he whirls about, the first object that meets his startled gaze is Ellis's handsome black horse plunging to earth almost at the edge of a shallow ravine some distance out in front of the butte.

"My God, sir," cries the orderly, "Sergeant Ellis is killed!"

Berrien's heart bounds. There, face downward upon the sward, motionless, just a few feet away from the plunging, death-stricken horse, lies the sergeant, his carbine dropped from his nerveless hand. At the same instant, red, glittering, bedaubed with paint, bespangled with cheap finery, two young Indian braves lash their ponies into furious gallop as they shoot up out of the shallow ravine, and, rifles in hand, coup-sticks advanced, race madly towards the stricken trooper in eager effort to secure the trophy of their prowess, the coveted scalp of the fallen foe.

"Your carbine, man!" yells Berrien to his orderly. "Quick! shoot that leader!" And putting spurs to his snorting horse, reckless of the fact that he is armed only with revolver and that the ravine may be full of Indians, the veteran soldier drives full tilt at the charging braves. He thinks only of the fact that one of his men lies prostrate and helpless before them. They are almost upon Ellis before Berrien has galloped a rod. They are within twenty paces of him when, with a shout of delight, the major sees him whirl suddenly over, grasp his carbine, and, all in a second, the flame leaps from the bronzed muzzle, the foremost warrior drops his rifle, whirls up a clinching, convulsive hand, and topples headforemost out of the saddle. Scott, the vedette, echoes with another shot that kicks up the dust close under the second pony's flashing heels. Its red rider veers in broad circle to the right, and in the twinkling of an eye the feathered war-bonnet bows low over the pony's stretching neck; Berrien's bullet whizzes harmlessly

above, and the major himself, borne by the rush of his half-maddened steed, dashes on past Ellis, now kneeling for another shot, and so goes crash into the midst of a little knot of yelling warriors just bounding up out of the gully to the rescue of their stricken comrade. "Bess, my wife; Winnie," are the only words he has time or thought to mutter, for instant death seems inevitable. But all the old fighting instinct is uppermost, and almost in the face of the foremost Sioux his revolver blazes its challenge, and horse and pony meet in tremendous shock, and the lighter steed goes tumbling and rolling over the turf. There is chorus of yells, shots, soldier cheers, thundering hoofs. There is a vision of glittering steel in front of his eyes, of hideous, painted face, a sudden sense of stumble and stunning fall, a shrill whoop of triumph, changing instantly into the death-cry, and while his Brule antagonist goes crashing down, pony and all, Berrien is conscious of the superb leap of a big black charger over his own prostrate form, of a stentorian cheer from half a dozen trooper throats, and the next minute Brewster is kneeling by his side, raising the honored gray head in his strong young arms, and the voice that thundered in battle-cry but an instant agone is trembling now as he calls for a canteen of water and bids his half-stunned commander not to strive to move.

"We've got two of them, sir, all right," he whispers, breathless, but well knowing that to be the best news he can give. "The rest got away and left a bullet-hole in your shoulder."

X.

"Since you ask me, sir, I most distinctly oppose its being referred to Major Berrien. He is doing well, but the excitement might bring on fever—and disaster."

It was Dr. Holden who spoke—and very firmly spoke—to Colonel Farquhar four days after the little fight beyond the Porcupine. The colonel sat with bowed head, grave and thoughtful. Before him stood his surgeon, respectful but most earnest in manner. Beside him on the narrow field-bed sat Rolfe, with face of gloom,—three or four letters and a telegram in his gauntleted hand. Already the wintry twilight was settling down; the wind, that had been moaning through the flimsy shelter for the last hour, was now whistling in gathering wrath and flapping every loose rag of canvas about the crowded cantonment.

Mules and horses at the picket-lines with one accord were turning tail to the black northwest and pawing the hard and frozen ground in nervous disquiet. The orderly who suddenly stepped within the tent was followed by a few whirling flakes of snow, and the first match he struck in the effort to light the colonel's field-lamp was puffed out in a twinkling.

"Give my compliments to Mr. Brewster and ask him to step here," said the colonel, after a moment's silence; and the orderly vanished.

In the camp of the Twelfth, where Berrien was universally beloved, three names had been on every lip since the battalion's return,—those of the gallant major himself, of Lieutenant Brewster, and of Sergeant Ellis. Painfully shot and stunned and bruised though he was, Berrien's wits had never left him. He was positive that the rush of war-parties towards the old road portended mischief, and, despite the lateness of the hour, he ordered the battalion to saddle at once and march to the Porcupine. From the abandoned lodge-poles found along the banks experienced hands had quickly lashed together a comfortable litter. Between these improvised shafts two of the most sedate of the elderly pack-mules were harnessed fore and aft. A bed of robes and blankets was hung midway, and, while Rolfe and Hazlett pushed ahead, scouting every ridge and ravine with their keen-eyed skirmishers, Gorham and Thorpe followed, escorting their beloved chief. Just as was anticipated, at nightfall the distant flash and report of rifles proved that the hostiles were busily at work in some deviltry or other, and, launching forward at the gallop, Rolfe's long line swooped down into the valley in time to send the yelling circle of mounted warriors whirling away into the ravines beyond the stream, and to rescue a little squad of scouts and troopers, a mere handful, who had ventured forth with despatches for Berrien's command and were fighting for life behind their slaughtered horses. Two were already sorely wounded, and all would doubtless have lost their scalps, but for the veteran major's clear judgment and the sense of duty that triumphed over physical pain.

"The ould man's clear grit all through," said his invariable eulogists, the troopers. But there would have been no dear old man left to them, as Ellis and Scott had borne testimony, had it not been for Brewster's daring charge into the midst of the red warriors. It was his bullet that laid low the savage brandisher of the knife just as he would have gashed the brave old major's throat; but "White Wolf" had counted his last coup, and, stripped of his finery, lay stiffening

on the prairie, a painted corpse, awaiting funeral honors at the hands of his howling comrades. Every soldier's heart rejoiced that it was Brewster who saved the major's life, for Brewster, of all the subalterns, was first favorite among the rank and file. And as for Ellis, though he was too exclusive—"too much like as though he wanted to be an officer"—to be generally popular among the men, he had always commanded their respect, and his unexpected prowess on this occasion won their genuine admiration. What nerve the fellow had, to be sure, to lie there "playing possum" just as though he were stone-dead and ripe for scalping, and so tempt his assailants out from the cover of the ravine, and then never stir until they were so close he simply *couldn't* miss, and so "got in his deadly work." Brewster and Ellis were the major's avengers, the two troopers who had dealt out death to the foe, and who were therefore, from the soldier point of view, the men most entitled to the honors of the day.

And yet, at the very monent when every other man in the regiment was lauding their names and congratulating them upon their deserved laurels, one captain, Rolfe, was practically demanding at the hands of his colonel that they should be stripped of their high estate and sent to the rear in arrest.

As Dr. Holden stood there listening to the accusations and arguments brought forward by Captain Rolfe, he could not but recall the remarks that, in one form or other, had occasionally been brought to his ears at Rolfe's expense. Even so conservative and loyal a fellow as Warren, the adjutant, had once summarized his character in forcible terms: "I respect his ability," said he, "but damn his egotism. Rolfe in this regiment is just like the one juror who said that they could long ago have agreed on conviction but for the eleven blooming idiots who held out for acquittal." Rolfe was a man of such intensity of opinion and purpose that, once having made up his own mind as to what somebody else ought to do, he deemed it not only a right but a duty to instruct the other party, no matter what that party's rank or station might be; and this was practically what Rolfe had been doing to his colonel ever since Holden appeared upon the scene. Personally Holden had never met Rolfe before the arrival of the regiment at Pawnee, but, except a certain dogmatism of manner in discussions over points in tactics, politics, law, or whist, he had decidedly liked everything about him, and told the youngsters as much when he found that they did not.

"Any man with half an eye can see that Rolfe wants to make the very best kind of an impression on Dr. and Mrs. Holden," said Randolph. "They are Miss Guthrie's nearest friends and relatives,—at least the nearest whom he knows." But Holden also liked Brewster, liked him well, and could not believe all that Rolfe was so strenuously urging upon the colonel: first, that Ellis was a thief and an outcast, and, second, that Brewster had known it all along and concealed it. The more positively and unflinchingly Rolfe asserted himself, the more did Holden resent it.

Finally Rolfe burst out with,—

"Well, Colonel Farquhar, I'm acting in this manner for the honor of the regiment to which I've been attached through thick and thin for nearly a quarter of a century. I heard you were just sending forward a report highly commending these two men, and I believed it my duty to inform you of their character. As you seem reluctant to accept my statements, I request as a matter of justice to me that you refer my report to Major Berrien at once, and he will corroborate my opinion."

Then and not till then did Farquhar firmly and almost sternly call his subordinate to order, and when Rolfe had been reduced to enforced silence the colonel turned to Holden, and Holden had given prompt voice to his utter objection to their disturbing the wounded major with any such matter. "But I will send for Mr. Brewster, Captain Rolfe, and question him in your presence," said Farquhar. And Brewster, who had just been enjoying a hearty hand-shake and pleasant words with several officers of the Eleventh who, despite the rising gale, had ridden over to congratulate him, went blithely and briskly to answer the colonel's summons. Warren had given him "the tip" as to the letter being prepared for Farquhar's signature. It was a joy to know that his name was to be sent forward with the praise of his soldierly and honored chief. It was almost rapture to conjecture what Winifred Berrien would think of him when she heard that his vigilance and dash had saved her father's life.

He looked, therefore, the very picture of stalwart, soldierly, brave-eyed manhood as he stepped quickly into the colonel's tent and stood erect before the silent trio there assembled. He came with a heart beating high with anticipation; but one glance at Rolfe's sombre and half-averted face, the first words in Farquhar's grave though courteous tones, banished all pleasurable thought and put him on his guard.

"Mr. Brewster, if I remember aright, it was you who presented

Sergeant Ellis for enlistment when we were in the Hills. Am I right?"

"Yes, sir."

"You knew him before his joining us, did you not?"

"A short time, sir; yes."

"Where had you known him, and how long?"

"At Deadwood, sir; I met him there on two occasions before he decided to enlist."

"Two occasions? And how long before he came to us?"

"Perhaps a week, sir."

"And you had never known him or of him before?"

"I had seen him, but I cannot say that I had ever known him."

"Mr. Brewster," burst in Captain Rolfe at this juncture before he could be checked, "do you mean to tell me you were not well acquainted with this so-called Ellis long before you met him in the Hills?"

"Captain Rolfe," was the instant answer, and the flush leaped to Brewster's cheeks, an angry light to his eyes, "I mean to tell you nothing whatever. I am answering Colonel Farquhar."

"Permit me to conduct this matter, Captain Rolfe," said Farquhar, stretching forth a restraining hand and checking the captain as he rose with another question on his lips. Rolfe, with almost any other man, might possibly have persisted. He knew Farquhar, however, and knew that however gentle and courteous might be his manner he could come down hard upon those who crossed him. So, with evident effort, he held his tongue, but remained standing. "Be good enough to resume your seat, captain," continued the colonel, all grave politeness; and Rolfe slowly and reluctantly subsided.

"You went to Helena once some five years ago as witness before a court, and the train was held up by road-agents, Mr. Brewster. Did you not meet this man about that time?"

"Yes, colonel, I saw him, but I did not know him from Adam."

"You conversed with him, did you not, and were at the same hotel at Helena with him?"

"I did; yes, sir; and I was at the same hotel for thirty-six hours. But he was a total stranger to me. His dress was that of a gentleman, so was his manner, and almost everybody in our car got to talking with him. He was the only one who really saw the train-robbers,—it was all done so quickly, while we were in our berths; but he had got aboard at some station just before the thing occurred."

"Did you not know when he enlisted that he gave an assumed name?"

"No, colonel, I did not. For all I know, Ellis is his own name."

"Yet you knew him as Ralph Erroll at Helena," burst in Rolfe again.

"Captain Rolfe," said the colonel, with marked emphasis, "I will ask you to withdraw; but, except by Dr. Holden's permission, you will not speak of this matter to Major Berrien. I desire to see Mr. Brewster for myself.—No, Holden; you remain."

There was no help for it now, Rolfe had to go; and go he did, without a word. Then Farquhar, in his courteous tones, repeated his question, and received prompt reply:

"He certainly gave his name as Erroll in Helena and as Ellis when he enlisted, colonel, but which is right or that either is right I have no means of knowing."

"Well, I am told that he gave you much of his history and that you lent him money in Deadwood."

"I did lend him, though at the time I thought I was giving him, twenty dollars to pay pressing debts which he had to settle before he could leave there and come to us. He was destitute and starving. He did tell me something of his past, but whether it was true or not I cannot say. The more I see of him the more I believe it; believe he was a gentleman born and bred, and that he had had hard luck, lost home and friends and fortune; that he took to the West and mining; that he made and lost alternately; that now he is reaping some reward for his labor. What I *know* is that he is a tip-top soldier, of whom the whole regiment has reason to be proud, even though I don't know what may be his own name."

Holden was listening eagerly to every word.

"May I ask a question, colonel?"

"Certainly, doctor."

"Brewster, did he ever tell you where his home was,—where his relatives now live?"

"Yes,—Louisville; and I have a packet which, should he be killed or mortally wounded, I have promised to unwrap and express to the address written within. I do not now even know what it is."

"Well, did he never speak of having lived in St. Louis,—having had friends there?"

"Never so much as mentioned the place, doctor."

For a moment there was silence, broken only by the dismal moan of the rising gale, the flap of canvas, and the creak of straining guy-ropes. Farquhar was still thinking deeply. At last he looked up.

"Captain Rolfe has lodged with me very serious charges against Ellis, and bases them on the report of professional detectives. As you know, I gave Ellis permission to ride over to the railway on Gorham's report that he had some important personal matters to look after. Has he returned yet?"

"He had not up to stables, sir, but his pass does not expire until tattoo, and I almost hope he has not started in face of this wind. It looks like a blizzard coming."

"When did Rolfe get these reports, if I may ask?" queried Holden. "I sent a telegram day before yesterday to Mrs. Holden that ought to have reached her that very evening,—it was to forestall any sensational newspaper story about the major's wound,—and I certainly looked for a reply of some kind yesterday."

"The wires are down both east and west, I'm told,—cut by 'friendlies' at the reservation, very probably. No despatch has passed either way since yesterday," answered the colonel. "Rolfe's must have come before that. Possibly we will have later news when the sergeant rides back to-night. I gave him an order to get any telegrams that might have arrived for the regiment. What time does the train get in from the East, do you know, doctor?"

"Somewhere about three, sir; but I fear there will be no mail for us for a day or two. Old hands here say it is madness to face a Dakota blizzard on the open prairie, and some of the officers think we are in for a gale, to say the least."

"Well, Brewster," said the colonel, kindly, "your statement is all that was needed to put an end to any idea that you knew all about Ellis before his enlistment. Of course I shall have to look into Captain Rolfe's charges against him; but say nothing about the matter for the present."

The cavalry trumpet, weird and fitful on the wings of the gale, was sounding first call for retreat as Brewster left the colonel's tent and started down the gentle slope to join his troop. Already the snow-flakes were driving almost horizontally with the biting wind, and, in the rapidly-gathering gloom, the men came huddling from their rude shelters, and, bundled to the ears in their great-coats, stood stamping and swinging their arms, impatient to have roll-call over and done

ıth. The colonel came forth a moment later, and together he and olden tramped over to the turf-walled structure in which their ounded comrade lay. The air was now so thick with snow that obects a hundred yards distant were blurred, and those beyond entirely bscured. Holden softly unstrapped and raised the canvas flap and oked his fur-capped head within the aperture.

"Sleeping?" he queried of the hospital attendant.

"Sleeping like a baby, sir," whispered the soldier, as he tiptoed to he entrance. "Captain Hazlett was reading to him over an hour, and hen he just dropped away, and the captain left at first call."

"That's capital," said Holden, turning to the chief. "He has worried so over the effect the news might have on his wife that I couldn't get him to sleep. Now, if we can only tide him over until morning, and if this beastly gale will only subside, we'll have good news for him."

"Well, don't let Rolfe get near him," said Farquhar, with a quiet smile. "There isn't a better duty officer in all the Twelfth, but somebody has to suppress him once in a while."

"He ought to be married," laughed Holden in reply.

That night when the trumpets pealed tattoo the musicians braced their backs against the blustering northwest and blew as best they could, though Boreas strove to silence their lustiest effort, and no trooper on the windward side could hear a note. Over the whistle and howl of the gale, far out on the desolate prairie, far to the southeast, however, the stirring, welcoming, hope-reviving strain was borne to the frozen ears of a solitary and well-nigh exhausted trooper, bidding him pluck up courage, rouse himself to renewed effort, and once more plunge forward into the blackness of the night. So long as he kept the gale in his battered face, so long would he be struggling towards comrades and shelter. Staggering, stumbling, sometimes crawling a few paces on hands and knees, sometimes turning his back to the icy blast and gasping for breath, sometimes burying his face in his arms, sometimes stretching those arms aloft to heaven and lifting up a silent prayer for help, for strength, he had struggled on afoot long after abandoning his fallen and crippled horse. No beckoning light, no glimmering star to guide, only the rude buffets of the cruel, pitiless blast, the stinging, biting thrashing of the snow, pelting him like small shot, to point the way, yet savagely to beat him back,—to bid him face and force them, yet furious to overwhelm and down. Weak and ex-

hausted, he had well-nigh abandoned the last vestige of hope, and a wailing cry went moaning aloft from his cracked and frozen lips: "God in heaven guide me; bear me up; give me strength. It is not for myself, but those poor women. God in mercy hear me. God in pity answer."

And over the wrath and fury of the mad hurricane, triumphing above the shriek and howl of the tempest, ringing like the voice of archangel through the vault of the storm-lashed skies, God's answer came. The Divine Pity, riding, indeed, upon the storm, spoke to him in the glad, thrilling, familiar strains of the far-away trumpets of the Twelfth.

XI.

"Who's there?" demanded Brewster from beneath his robes and blankets, as late that night his name was called.

"It is I,—Holden. Tumble up, man; I want you, quick!"

"My God, doctor, is Berrien worse?"

"No, thank heaven, he's sound asleep. Sergeant Ellis was brought in by the guard half an hour ago. He fell exhausted at the lines. We've just brought him to at the hospital tent, and from what I can make out—he's so weak yet—there's something back there out on the prairie, an ambulance and women. I ran over for you as soon as I could; for you probably know him best."

"Be with you in a minute," shouted Brewster, kicking off his moccasins and struggling into his heavy boots. "Lie still, Haddock: you're not wanted," he added. "What time is it, Doc?"

"Long after eleven,—near midnight, I judge. Come as quick as you can. I'll go right back."

In five minutes, in the dim light of the hospital tent, Brewster was bending over Ellis's prostrate form. Others had pulled off his heavy boots and were chafing his half-frozen feet. Holden had just administered another dose of brandy; but at sight of Brewster the languid, half-open eyes began to gleam and the muscles of the lips to twitch.

"Stoop lower, Brewster: he wants to speak to you," said Holden. And Brewster inclined his ear almost to the black moustache.

Then with sudden bound he was on his feet again.

"What!" he cried. "God of heaven, man! do you mean it?"

His face was ashen in an instant, but his eyes never quit their questioning gaze. Ellis nodded vehemently, striving again to speak.

"Doctor, do you hear?" cried Brewster, in mad dismay. "He says Mrs. Berrien and Winifred are in the ambulance broken down at Wolf Creek!" And without another word he darted from the tent.

Ten minutes more, a dozen men of the "black troop" were bracing cinch-straps, buckling throat-latches, and loading blankets on their astonished steeds. Despite the howling of the gale, half the camp was up and astir, Farquhar among the first. Brewster had his own horse saddled and was astride before any one else was fairly dressed, and by this time Ellis had recovered sufficiently to speak and tell his story. The train from the East came in on time at three, and he was amazed to see Mrs. Berrien's face. No one dreamed of her coming, for the wires were down. The quartermaster ran to meet her, and the sergeant himself hastened to give her good news of her husband. Nothing would answer, though, but that she must go to him at once. In vain did Major Sterrett plead with her, saying it took five hours to drive over to the cantonment by day, and he feared the evening would be dark and stormy. Go she would; and the quartermaster ordered out his own ambulance and best four-mule team, with his own driver and a couple of armed outriders. He gave the ladies hot tea, loaded in lots of blankets and robes, and they started about three-thirty, were in the teeth of the gale at five o'clock, in pitch darkness and off the road at six, and somewhere about seven the mules became unmanageable in the blizzard, whirled short around, and snapped off the pole. By this time, too, one outrider was lost, the other was frozen half to death and had been drinking whiskey. The driver was so stiff he could hardly move hand or foot, and he and Ellis had the utmost difficulty in cutting loose the mules. There was every prospect of their capsizing the wagon; and they had to get the ladies out until the beasts were free. Then he found they were close to Wolf Creek, more than half-way, and Ellis determined to push on through to the cantonment for help, first replacing the ladies in the covered wagon, wrapping them in furs and blankets and fastening the curtains. The hurricane increased. He and his horse were both blinded, and at last the poor brute stumbled, fell into a ravine, and could barely struggle to his feet. Abandoning his horse, Ellis pushed on afoot, and reached camp he knew not how. He only remembered hearing that distant tattoo.

Farquhar never hesitated. Brewster never asked. Holden made

him and each of his men swallow a cup of steaming coffee, and the colonel took it as a matter of course that Curly was the very man to go.

"You have brandy and blankets in plenty?" he asked. "Holden is loading more into the ambulance, and it follows at once. Off with you now."

Impatient even of this brief detention, Brewster led his little band of troopers off into the night. There was not a man in the Twelfth that wouldn't have faced worse things than a blizzard for old Berrien's sake, and as for this it was but a bagatelle. "All we've got to do is scud before the gale, fellers," sung out Murphy, joyously, as they went cantering out of camp and in a second more were lost to sight and hearing. Then came the clatter and rattle of the hospital team, the ambulance, weighed down with robes and blankets and a brace of heavy troopers, despite which ballast the light vehicle was well-nigh whirled over by the force of the gale. And then Farquhar and the doctor had time to turn to Ellis and to think.

"They must have got my despatch Tuesday night and left by the earliest train," said Holden. "How utterly outrageous a proceeding! And yet I might have known it of Mrs. Berrien."

Meantime there had been dismay at the quartermaster's dépôt. Sterrett, noting the increasing severity of the gale at nightfall, had begun upbraiding himself for having allowed the ladies to persist in the rash attempt. He had done his best to persuade Mrs. Berrien and to assure her that the major was doing well; he pointed out to her that they had nothing but rough shelter of log and turf and canvas at the camp; that there was absolutely no place where delicately nurtured women could be cared for. He offered her and Miss Winifred his own warm, snug, though rudely-furnished room at the station, and ordered his chief clerk to clear out and sleep in the office. He told her how impossible it was for him to leave his post and his duties of forwarding supplies, and explained that there was no officer to properly escort them. But one by one she had promptly overthrown his objections. Escort? Here was Sergeant Ellis. What better could she ask? As for lack of accommodation at the camp, had she not lived all one winter with her beloved Dick in a Kansas dug-out just the year after their marriage? Had she not camped with him on the Yellowstone?—nursed him in a deserted log hut through the mountain fever in the Big Horn? Were there not women, school-teachers and

he agent's and trader's families there at the agency? What had she o fear for herself or Winifred in the midst of the Twelfth?

"But the regiment is ordered to march to-morrow," said Sterrett. 'It is an open secret that the Indians have slipped away from the roops along the Cheyenne, and there's the mischief to pay."

"All the more reason for my being at my husband's side," promptly nswered this army heroine. "Dr. Holden will have to go, and Dick will be left practically alone. Winifred and I start at once, even if we have to walk."

Of course that had ended the matter. Against such determination he was powerless. Having first done his best to detain them, he had then bent all his efforts to the duty of transportation, and now at a late hour in the evening and in the energetic and familiar language of the corral was blaspheming the fate that had led him to yield his better judgment to her importunity. Somewhere about nine o'clock one of the outriders had been dragged off his horse, more dead than alive, and told a pitiful tale of having been driven before the storm, and he didn't even know how far they had got before he lost sight of the ambulance entirely, but was sure that one and all they had lost the road and now were adrift on the prairie. This was bad enough; but at ten o'clock or thereabouts the corral-master came in to say that the riderless horse of the other man had just arrived at the gate, and, barely able to stagger, was led inside.

"Pete had a flask along," said the corral-master, sententiously. That's what's the matter with him."

Then Sterrett could stand it no longer. Soldiers there were none to send, they were all over the range at the cantonment or beyond; civilians were there in plenty, dozens of refugees from the ranches, dozens of railroad-men and train-hands, one or two disgusted correspondents who had got the "tip" as to impending movements all too late to catch the luckier members of that all-pervading fraternity, but who were quick to realize the "scoop" they would have in transmitting to their respective journals full and picturesque details of the Dakota blizzard. It is indeed an ill wind that blows nobody good.

Even though every one told him he could accomplish nothing whatever before daylight, Sterrett had a little party of stalwart frontiersmen duly equipped by midnight and ready to start the instant the gale should show signs of moderating. Hour after hour it shrieked and howled, driving the sheets of snow before it, sweeping the frozen

prairie clean as a floor, but whirling dense white clouds into every sheltered gulch and ravine, settling the drifts in the lee of every stack and shed and building at the railway-station, where, "dead" and abandoned, lay the engine of the East-bound train, the passengers huddling for warmth into a single car and cheerfully discussing the propriety of using the other for fire-wood.

And then, before the first faint glimmer of dawn, as though spent with its own violence, the gale began to die. The clouds scudding southeastward drew aside, uncurtaining the placid heavens, where the stars were faintly gleaming and then twinkling out of sight. Soon in a blaze of glory and triumph the sun rose slowly over the far-distant bluffs and looked down upon the scene of wrath and desolation wrought by rude Boreas in the conqueror's absence; and just then, too, there hove in sight a battered little squad of troopers on spent and jaded steeds, and the sergeant in command rode breast-deep into the drift at the south entrance of Sterrett's office and yelled over the intervening shield of snow the stunning question,—

"Did the ladies get back all right? We can't find the ambulance anywhere along the Wolf."

XII.

Before quitting the ambulance and its precious freight, Ellis had made such examination of the neighborhood as was possible in the thick darkness, and discovered that they were close to the edge of a narrow, winding ravine with abruptly-sloping banks, and it was in here that those sagacious mules had sought shelter from the force of the blast. The ambulance was standing on a veritable ridge, exposed to the full fury of the gale, the slope to the rapid-running Wolf just in front, the ravine to the right rear. Shouting to the ladies to fear nothing, he had no difficulty, when aided by the driver, in starting the wheels, and the instant the vehicle was partially turned into the track of the storm it was blown backwards down into the soft bed of snow already thick and deep. Here, under the lee of the banks, the stout wagon was comparatively sheltered, for the top of the canvas cover was just a trifle below the general level of the prairie. The mules, startled from their fancied security by the rattle of wheels and canvas as the ambulance was run down the slope into their midst, seized with one of

their unacc[illegible]
out upon [illegible]
of snow E[illegible]
to the ladi[illegible]
have no di[illegible]
meantime [illegible]
Berrien's brave [illegible]
in his ears [illegible]
mouth of the [illegible]
perilous mis[illegible]
what was [illegible]
snow bed [illegible]
stock of [illegible]
It was an [illegible]

But, [illegible]
them far to [illegible]
the only ones [illegible]
his little squad [illegible]
morning, they [illegible]
fired their [illegible]
an answering cry [illegible]
Brewster knew that the ladies [illegible]
canvas shelter they could [illegible] He was
assured that the driver and Pete were with them, also well provided
with robes and blankets, and that they were in no immediate danger
of freezing; but he could not bear the thought of the long, weary
waiting, the dread anxiety, the darkness, isolation in all that howling
wilderness. He could picture Winifred nestled in her mother's arms,
wondering, wondering, as the hours dragged by, when, if ever, human
aid would come to their relief. At four o'clock he and his party had
searched and scouted for half a dozen miles up and down the valley.
Some of his best and stanchest men were giving out, and these, with
Sergeant Brooks, he ordered to push along with the gale and seek
news and shelter at the station. Three others he posted near the main
crossing of the Wolf, under the lee of a little bluff, where they and
their horses speedily stamped a hole in the snow-drifts around the hos
pital ambulance and huddled for warmth,—fires they could not light,
even had there been a vestige of fuel,—and then, with three undaunted
campaigners at his back, he had once again turned down-stream, fol

lowing its wanderings in the darkness and feeling for ravines he c
not see along the southern bank. Time and again they dismou
and ran beside their horses to restore circulation to the numbed
stiffened feet and fingers. Time and again they plunged waist-d
into drifts, and the horses floundered to their girths in the pow
snow. At last Brewster noted that here and there far in the no
western skies the stars were beginning to peep; the clouds were d
ing away, the dawn was nigh, the hurricane abating. Broader
brighter the daylight stole over the storm-swept prairie, streaked
and there with fleecy, winding veins, and when at last the sun aros
its unclouded splendor the gale had died away to a mere ghost of
furious self, and they rubbed the icy fringe from their battered e
lids and gazed long and wistfully up and down that shallow, wind
valley, all heaped and tumbled with the driven snow, and saw no
sign of those whom they had rushed to save.

Never for an instant did Brewster relax his efforts. Giving e
of his men a pull at the flask, he selected little Murphy as about
most compact and certainly the lightest of the trio, and bade him m
his way to camp and tell the colonel that up to sunrise no vestige
the lost ones had been found, and suggest that additional parties
sent out at once.

"Tell somebody to bring my field-glass," he added, as Murphy
about to ride away. "If I had dreamed we would have found n
ing of the ambulance until this time, I never should have left
Good luck to you now, corporal. Ride as lively as you can."

Murphy turned promptly away, spurred his unwilling horse thro
the ice into the black and racing waters of the Wolf, and was prese
following a little break in the north side which led by a more grad
ascent to the prairie beyond.

"Now, men, one of you ride back towards the party at the fo
poke into every ravine to your left,—they're all full of snow: it
be the ambulance is so deep in the drift they could hear no sound.
you find anything, the faintest trace, ride up on the prairie and ci
your horse to the left.—Morse, you come with me."

"Beg pardon, lieutenant, I think Murphy sees something no
said Morse, indicating the farther shore with a nod of his fur-cove
head. Whirling eagerly about, Brewster was surprised to see
little Irishman, a hundred yards or so away, crouching low on
horse's back, still in the ravine and up to his girth in snow, and p

ing cautiously eastward, his eyes just level with the bank. Then he was plainly seen to signal. In an instant Brewster and his men were plunging into the rapid stream, crushing the ice that skirted the shores and bounding out upon the frozen ground beyond. Again Murphy held forth a hand,—a warning gesture, not a beckoning one. "Keep down, keep down," he signalled; and, wondering, the little party of troopers cautiously followed into the ravine.

"What do you see?" queried Brewster, eager and agitated.

"Upon my soul, sir, I wish I knew; but it's more like Indians than anything I can think of."

"Indians? where away?" And, with a wild fear at heart, Brewster gazed over the bank in the direction indicated.

"Indians, and coming this way, sir, or I'm a tenderfoot," muttered Morse, a man who had served in the Twelfth for many a year.

"What on earth can they be doing so far south of the agency? You don't think any of the hostiles have got down this way?"

"They're all hostiles, sir, when there's only three or four ag'in' them. It don't matter whether these are from the agency or the Bad Lands now, if they can catch a white man a-napping, and something has brought them out here."

"My God, man! you don't suppose they've heard of the ambulance?"

"They hear things quicker than we do, lieutenant. Day or night, calm or storm, those fellows can all around beat us in getting news."

"And they are coming from the northeast, lieutenant," chimed in Murphy. "That means if they are from the villages near the agency they've circled around our people."

Breathless the little party watched the coming dots. The stream bore to the northeast after a deep bend about half a mile away, and on the farther bank, moving nearly parallel with the valley, about a dozen dark objects could be seen moving at rapid lope, the springing, tireless gait of the Indian pony. Ponies they were unquestionably, and each with his rider. Every moment brought them nearer and nearer, until, as they spread out in extended order across the level surface, it was possible to count their number,—eleven; possible to note that every now and then some one of the number in front or on the flanks would rein in suddenly and circle round and stoop, as though examining tracks upon the prairie.

"It is not possible the ambulance can have got so far over as that,"

muttered Brewster. "It is not possible that they can have heard of it in all that fearful storm. Why, Morse, it's madness to think of it!"

"I don't know how far the team may have been driven out that way, sir, but the blizzard came from the northwest,—from their left front; it beat across their path all the way, and mules won't face it; and if it isn't the ambulance they're after, what can it be?"

"My God, if we only knew where it was!" groaned Brewster. "Come what may, men, we've got to stand 'twixt it and those scoundrels. Here, Murphy, lively now, slip back down into the valley and ride for all you're worth to the ford and bring those fellows back with you, every man of them. Tell them to keep under the bank and ride like hell. Off with you now." And this time there was no recall: Murphy was out of sight in a flash.

Nearer and nearer rode the savage horsemen, now about a mile away. Already Morse and his silent comrade had swung their carbines out of their leathern buckets, thrust a cartridge in the chamber and loosened others in the woven thimbles. Brewster never for an instant quit his gaze, but his hand had stolen back and loosed the flap of the holster at his hip. The movements of the Indians had puzzled him: they were riding not as though moving on some point already determined, but rather as if searching, feeling their way. Every now and then, too, some of their number cantered to the edge of the bank and seemed to scrutinize the valley.

"Snow-drifts are too deep and plentiful in there, around that bend, sir. That's why they're up on the prairie."

Brewster's heart seemed almost to stand still. All on a sudden the leaders swerved; the blanketed riders could be seen bending low and over as they swung their nimble steeds in circle to the right. And then, then, an instant more, and, tossing the powdery snow all in a fleecy white cloud, there came tearing up out of the depths of some unseen *coulée* a lively herd of Indian ponies rejoicing in their unwonted freedom and determined not to be herded back to slavery without a struggle.

It was hard to repress the shout of joy that sprang to the soldiers' lips. Then it wasn't the ambulance, after all; nothing but this frolicsome band of rascals that, after breaking away from the Indian boys the evening before, had doubtless been driven before the gale, demanding the sending forth of quite a party of the young men in search, [illegible] before the storm had fully abated. For a moment the troopers

rgot their mission as they watched the chase. Fresh and unhampered y weight of any kind, the scurrying band came sweeping along the dge of the distant bluff, following an active, mischievous leader and eaving their jaded pursuers far behind. The Indian knows too much o chase a running horse; he leaves him to his own devices, well knowng he will more quickly stop when unpursued and can then more eadily be headed off and turned back to the ways he should go. On ame the nimble herd, full tilt, towards the elbow in the shallow valley here a broad white streak told of deep drifted snow, and there the eader veered to the left and south and would doubtless have stretched way at racing speed on that course, but for one young warrior on a lun-colored pony, who, with the speed of the wind, came darting out across the level surface beyond, gamely, skilfully heading him. Around went the leader once more in wide circle westward, around the southernmost edge of the fleecy drift, and then, with thunder of hoofs, the whole troop went bounding away to the west without a living soul to interpose between them and the bald, rolling heights at the far horizon, miles and miles away.

"Go it, pony! I'm glad to see a redskin done for once!" was Morse's jubilant shout. And then, sudden and sharp, "Good God! What's that? Lieutenant, look!"

Not six hundred yards away now, the little band of ponies, following their spirited leader, had suddenly halted at the very edge of some dip or sink in the prairie that lay to the southeast of the snowy rift in which the troopers were crouching, still hidden, they and their horses, from the sharp eyes of the chasing Indians. Then as suddenly, tossing high their scraggy manes, as though with one accord, the nimble brutes whirled to the south, their leader indulging in a fine flourish of heels as he sped away. And now Morse lay against the bank pointing eagerly to a couple of black objects startlingly outlined on the glistening white of the snow, two objects that came plunging up from the invisible depths of the hollow, struggling breast-deep in the drifts, and at last reached the edge of the prairie, and, followed instantly by another couple, with their long ears erect, with outstretched neck and eager brayings clattered away in pursuit of the herd. Brewster knew them at a glance,—Sterrett's ambulance mules. Indeed, the broken pole was still dangling between the two in the rear and bounding with them over the frozen turf.

And that swerve, that sudden halt and turn to the south end, had

cost the band their liberty. Darting along abreast of them, but nearly half a mile away to the south, the warrior on the dun-colored pony had shot far out beyond them, and now, sweeping around in wide circle to his right, rode between them and the broad wastes to the west. Two other Indians were circling in their front, barring the way to the low hills to the south. Others still, straggling far out eastward, reined up so as not to interfere with the "rounding" of the herd, and in a moment or two more these three experts had turned their runaway property in wide sweep back into the shining track of the sun, and in very few minutes the matter was settled; the ponies were sulkily trotting along the bank beyond the bend, headed for home and hard work again, with the ambulance mules braying at their heels. Here the younger Indians, the boys, took charge, and from the distant slopes, from south and east and from the prairie to the west, the others came cantering towards that sharp angle half a mile away and gathered in eager consultation about one who seemed to be their leader.

All this, and much more, Brewster and his men were watching with bounding pulses, in breathless excitement, Brewster with feelings of mingled hope and despair. Now he knew that the ambulance must be somewhere near at hand, possibly up that long ravine on the south side that slanted in from the prairie not a hundred yards away below them. Surely the banks looked as though there were a good ford at that point. Might not that be the very one of which Ellis spoke? Now, if it were but possible to drop back out of the drifts in which they were hiding and recross the stream, they might yet creep unobserved into the mouth of that gully and feel their way afoot until, somewhere in the snow, they came upon, as he now felt sure they must, the storm-bound wagon with its precious contents. From their crouching-place it was impossible to see across the ridge that separated them from the ravine referred to; but to the southeast the prairie lay before them, and the keenest eye could detect no sign of hollow between that which lay so near them and that from which those vagabond mules had emerged far out upon the plain. Somehow, Brewster felt certain that now at last he was actually within pistol-shot of the ambulance, within speaking-distance, almost, of the girl he so fondly loved, whose very life at this instant depended not only on his courage, but also on his judgment. One false move would ruin all.

So long as the Indians kept up their powwow at the bend, so long *was Winifred safe.* The longer they delayed the nearer would it bring

Murphy and the men from the main crossing three miles away up-stream. Then, six to six, he could laugh at the Sioux. But any one who knew Indians at all knew that the discovery of the mules would only set them to work to find the snow camp from which the animals had broken away. Ay, even as these things flashed through his mind, Brewster could see that they were signalling "halt" to the herd-guard, and that two of the youngsters were lashing their ponies out in front of the band and gradually bringing it to a stand-still. Almost at the same moment, too, those in consultation separated, three riding swiftly after the herd, while the other three, slowly and cautiously, began to advance towards the hollow whence the mules had emerged. Evidently they expected to find the white man's wagon there.

"Now is our time, men," muttered Brewster. "Quick! off with your side-lines and double them about your horses' forefeet, so that they can't even hobble out of the drift. Keep them here. Take your lariat and hopple my horse, one of you. Throw him if need be. I'll watch those beggars down-stream. Ah, I thought so," he muttered: "they've grabbed the mules and are examining the harness; that will tell them easily enough they were cut loose after breaking the pole. Quick, men! throw snow by the bushel all over your horses. Roll in it yourselves. Get all the white on you can; then run down the gully as soon as you have your horses hidden, and watch for my signal. The moment I say go, bend double and scamper to the ice yonder, then make for the bluffs. I'll follow instantly."

Meekly the two troop-horses, after having been led to a deeper point down the *coulée*, bent their heads and submitted to the lashing together of their forefeet, but Brewster's "Black Jack" was of different mould. He would not yield.

"Over with him, Morse. No time to lose now. Lash him tight, or he'll break away," called Brewster. And poor Jack's plunging availed him nothing. A moment more, with a dismal groan, he was on his side in the soft, cold bed, the lariat was being lashed and knotted so that even furious struggles could not free him, and then, to add to the indignity, his erstwhile friends and comrades were heaping new insult and a storm of snow upon him. Jack couldn't understand it.

"Ready, men! They're just peeping over into the hollow now. The moment they're fairly in it, I give the word."

Twenty—thirty seconds of breathless silence. Then a quick gesture; a quick, low-toned, but imperative "Go!"

Go they did, skimming over the pool above the rapids, leaping the narrow chasm where the black waters, dancing and frothing, had defied the ice king; ducking under the opposite bank; carbines in hand, revolvers at the hip, cartridges gleaming in every belt; and after them, leaping, yet bending low, went Brewster. Another moment, and they reached the mouth of the ravine, burst through the powdery drift, and then, Brewster leading, eyes everywhere, almost on all fours they scurried along half-way up the opposite slope, keeping well under the crest and just at the edge of the deep drifts to their right. Fifty—sixty yards they made their rapid way, and then around a little bend and among great heaps and mounds of glistening, shimmering white there rose an odd-shaped heap, only a trifle higher than its fellows, and from the midst of it there projected a dingy, whity-brown canvas, slanting to the north, and, with a cry of delight half stifled on his lips, Carroll Brewster leaped into the snow, floundered to his armpits in the powdery drift, and in a moment more had forced his way through the fragile white wall before him, had seized the handle of the door, and Winifred Berrien, starting from her mother's clasping arms, blinded for an instant by the glare of radiant sunshine, barely able as yet to rally from the stupor-like slumber into which she had fallen, heard her name called in the joyous tones she knew so well, and saw her lover, a stalwart, glowing, rejoicing young snow-god, all sparkling with the white crystals, all glistening in the glorious beams, gazing upon her with a love-light in his brave blue eyes that brought instant glow to her own wan and pallid cheek. And then, before she could even speak, before her mother could emerge from the enfolding robes, a shout was heard, then the sudden ring of a rifle-shot, followed instantly by another, the spat as of a whip-lash on the canvas top. Something tore its way through roof and front with a spiteful "zip."

"Down! down upon the floor! both of you, quick!" shouted Brewster, as he slammed the door, and the next instant they heard the order in his ringing tones, half stifled in the snow, "Fire, men! Keep 'em off! Fire!" They heard the quick bang! bang! of carbines close at hand, the prompt response of rifles distant as were the first, the whistle of lead through the icy air, the shrill yells of battling Indians, the furious gallop of bounding hoofs. Everywhere to their front the rapid fire increased. More yells, partly of triumph, partly ummoning additional warriors to the spot, then the muffled beat of ming hoofs, and, in the midst of it all, Brewster's stern voice, calm

and steady: "Aim well, men, but fire lively. Don't let them get again so close as to have a shot at the wagon. Watch that above all." Two—three minutes the sound of battle raged about them, increasing at the front. A soldier voice was heard to say, "There's more of them coming, sir. You can see them down there to the east." And Mrs. Berrien's heart grew faint with fear. Winifred had buried her face upon her breast and closed her ears to the horrid sounds. And then, all on a sudden, the yells of the charging Indians seemed to grow fainter, then sounds of dismay arose among them, then the cries were drowned in the clatter of iron-shod hoofs and the chorus of soldier cheers. Murphy and his little squad came whirling up the bank, and Mrs. Berrien's heart poured forth in praise and thanksgiving at the joyous Milesian hail:

"To hell wid 'em, fellers! Sure all B throop's comin',—not two miles behind!"

XIII.

There was silence and anxiety in the long range of winter camps about the agency. The Twelfth were gone, nobody knew just where; but over to the north, over towards those frowning "Bad Lands,"—all the more wild and treacherous now that the snow had filled every rift and crevice, for the jagged surface was one mass of pitfalls,—other battalions of horse were also gone, and the vigilant watch over those Indians still clustering about their old haunts in the valley was redoubled. The heavier guns of the field-battery commanded the smoky lodges, the lighter pieces were away with the cavalry. The infantry, muffled to their eyebrows, manned the rifle-pits and guard-line and threw their sheltering wings over the deserted camps. For good or for ill, the crisis was at hand. Whatsoever doubt had existed as to the almost universal hostility of the Sioux was banished by the events of the preceding week. The attempted ambush of Sergeant Ellis of Berrien's advance-guard, the attack upon the scouts and couriers at the Porcupine, and, lastly, the affair at the Wolf, in which Brewster a second time had gained distinction, all pointed unerringly to one conclusion: whatsoever might be their assurances to officials high in rank, to agents whose power would be at an end were war to ensue, to self-constituted framers of public opinion, every soldier on the spot knew, and well knew, that the Indians would be peaceable only in presence of a formi-

dable force of blue-coats, but that nothing but ambush and massacre awaited the whites who ventured forth unguarded. Up to this moment, however, of all those gathered at the scene the only troops which had had actual collision with the Sioux were of Berrien's battalion.

Far away south at the Pawnee, old Kenyon had been doing his utmost to still the anxious fears among the families of the absent soldiers. There had been lively excitement when the papers arrived giving sensational details of Berrien's wound and of the affair at the Porcupine, but it was as nothing to that which prevailed over the tidings of the imminent peril in which Mrs. Berrien and Winifred had been placed. That it was just like Mrs. Berrien to insist on joining her wounded husband at once was conceded by all, but opinions differed as to the propriety of her course in taking Winifred with her. This the major decided by prompt assertion that Miss Berrien doubtless refused to be left behind. "And, being a very lovely blending of the characteristics of both her parents," said he, "it would have been decidedly unlike Miss Berrien to have stayed at home."

And then came the dread news that a great band from the north-east, reinforced by a reckless gang of fanatical young ghost-dancers from the Bad Lands, had broken away, and that all the regiments had gone to head them off. Far, without a fight, they could not go. The question was which regiment would be the first to meet them. Then the next night's mail brought the next day's papers, and the Twelfth, having swung loose and being absent from the neighborhood whence were derived the items on which correspondents based their reports and editors their comments, shared the usual fate of the absentee, and, having sustained the only casualties and inflicted the only punishments yet heard of about the agency, was now coming in for its share of the "*toujours tort*" to which it was, of course, justly entitled. Kenyon first glared at and then exploded over a despatch which read somewhat as follows:

"All hope of bloodless solution of the difficulty is now at an end. Even the most peaceably disposed among the reservation Indians are furious over what they do not hesitate to term the slaughter of their clansmen in the three affairs that have recently occurred; and it is an open secret that, at general head-quarters, the gravest annoyance is felt over the total overthrow of carefully-laid plans, all caused by the injudicious conduct of certain hot-headed officers of cavalry. The friends of White Wolf, the principal 'brave' shot by Major Berrien's troopers,

declare that he and those with him were friendly and only striving to reach the major with the news that couriers were coming, hoping thereby to earn something to eat, for they were cold and hungry, when they were fired on without warning, and, even while making signals of peace and friendship, White Wolf was slain. Then the Brulés who were with them could not be restrained, and attacked the couriers in revenge. As for the affair at Wolf Creek after the blizzard, there is unspoken denunciation among the Indians, and the 'damnation of faint praise' in other quarters, of the conduct of a cavalry officer present. The Indians declare they had gone out only to gather up their ponies. The sight of the mules told them there must be an ambulance stalled somewhere in the drifts, and they were eagerly searching for it to render succor and aid, when they were fired upon from ambush by the lieutenant and his men, and two of their ponies were killed and one young Indian shot through the leg. The Indians declare they could easily have killed Major Berrien, but merely strove to defend themselves and explain, and that had they been hostile they could have finished the lieutenant and his little squad at the Wolf Creek crossing long before reinforcements came. Altogether, there is something so plausible in their statements that it is understood that the conduct both of the major and at least one of his subalterns will be made the subject of official investigation."

"Well, well, *well!*" said Kenyon. "Thank God *I'm* not serving a grateful nation in the heart of the Indian country. It's bad enough to be shot, and worse to be lied about, and that is all the comfort there is in being a cavalryman, if I do say it who am nothing but a cross-grained old crank of a doughboy. If this is what the Twelfth is to get for 'a mere affair of outposts,' what the devil will be said of them if they should get into a regular pitched battle? Here, Mr. Adjutant, dump that paper in the fire, and don't let a woman at the post know anything about it.—Know it already? How the mischief could they?"

"There were half a dozen of them, sir, at Mrs. Hazlett's reading another copy of that paper as I came down. And poor Mrs. Thorpe is crying her eyes out. She's been utterly upset since the news came that the Twelfth had been sent out. Good God, sir, she's coming in now!"

It was indeed poor Mrs. Thorpe who entered, pallid, her eyelids swollen with weeping. Old Kenyon was on his feet in an instant and leading her to a chair.

"My dear madam, my *dear* madam," he began, "indeed you must not give way so. I assure you there is no cause for such dread and anxiety. Do strive to control yourself."

"I cannot! oh, Major Kenyon, I cannot! I have been through so much, such fearful scenes!" she sobbed, wringing her nervous hands, rocking to and fro in an agony of grief. "Oh, it is easy for those who have not lived the life we had to live in the old days to counsel patience, calmness. I was only a child then, kneeling at my mother's side when the news came in that widowed half the women in the post. I spent my girlhood in the regiment. How many are left of the officers who were so good to me then? Mother was only one of a dozen whose hearts were broken,—broken as, oh, God! I feel mine is to be. They took my father long years ago, now they demand my husband, my babies' father, my all, their all! Oh, God! oh, God!"

Sobbing, rocking to and fro in her uncontrollable grief, the poor girl clung to Kenyon's hand, and the old fellow's eyes blinked and smarted with the tears he could not quite force back. He laid the other hand upon her bowed and swaying head.

"My child," he said, brokenly, "for your babies' sake, try to bear up. Be your father's daughter. I knew and loved him well,—knew you when you rode your first pony at the old fort up the Missouri. You know well I wouldn't try to deceive you. I can't think the Twelfth is to bear the brunt of this business. They don't belong in that department at all. They are only borrowed from here; and surely there are troops enough there, more than enough, to overawe that pestilent gang. All that is necessary will be to surround the Indians, let them see what a force we have, and they'll knuckle down. Don't cry so, Mrs. Thorpe; don't cry, my child. Let me take you over home now. Just get the little ones around you to-night, and I'll bring over some famous oranges that came to-day, and——Why, I don't believe the Twelfth will have to pull another trigger. Think how many other regiments and commands there are there."

"I do, I do, and I pray and pray, but no comfort comes. Did you ever know a time when they were not in the thick of the fight? Did you ever hear of any time when the loss did not fall heaviest on us?"

"Don't think of that now," he pleaded. "Don't borrow trouble from either past or future. Come, let me take you home, there's a good girl. I tell you if that band hasn't surrendered they've scattered all over creation, and you can no more catch them than you can—than

you can—a newspaper lie. That's the strongest simile I can think of. Did you hear what they were saying about Berrien and Brewster?" he queried, eager to divert her thoughts from her own misery.

"I did. Isn't it cruel? But Major Berrien has his wife and Winnie with him, and they're bringing him home; but if poor George is shot, what can I do?"

"Do? Why, you shall go right to him, if I have to give myself a seven days' leave and take you." And so, soothing, comforting as best he knew how, the veteran major led her home to her wondering brood, to the laughing, crowing baby leaping in the nurse's arms, delighted to see the little mother again, to the joyous children romping in the firelight, innocent of care or fear, and then, striving for their sake to still her sobs, to dry her tears, he left her to put the little ones to bed, to clasp their folded hands in hers as the wee, white-gowned girlies knelt at her side, echoing—God only knew with what piteous entreaty—the lisping prayer for His divine protection for the loved father, the devoted husband, the gallant soldier who that very day had fought his last fight and lay lifeless on the frozen sod.

Over the eastward bluffs, cold and hard and gray, the morning light had slowly crept to the zenith. Over the sky was spread one limitless pall of cloud, cheerless and repellent,—a pall so dense that not one friendly star had peeped, not one rift of sunshine now could force its way. All below, bleak, frowning, and sullen, a bare and blasted landscape; low hills and ridges east and west, low-lying shallow and swale between, cheerless, treeless, shrubless, not even a veil of snow to hide its nakedness, to lend one pitying touch to break the dull, dead monotony of its wintry desolation; sweeps and slopes rolling away unbroken to the frowning horizon at the west, sterner, harsher lines among the bluffs across the tortuous stream-bed, between whose ragged banks an icy, lonely, and dismal rivulet is curdling now, spreading out into frozen shallows at the flats, moaning and complaining around its warped and sudden bends, desolate as the surrounding desolation, deserted as the Dead Sea, its banks repellent even to such sharers of Dakota solitudes as the coyote and the cottonwood, shunned of man or beast or tree,—a stream of silence and gloom at the dawn of this December day, and so cheerless is its every surrounding, so appalling the unnatural hush, that one would never dream of life upon its blasted banks.

Yet, listen! Unseen, but dominant, the sun has risen above the eastern hills, and, as the light broadens even where it cannot warm, there floats upon the air from far away at the southwest, faint and clear, a cavalry trumpet call; soft at first, then *crescendo*, it ceases suddenly in shrill high note. It thrills through and through a rare atmosphere unruffled by the fleeting wing of hardiest bird. Like the wistful call of scattered quail, it seems to say, "Where are you?" And prompt, expectant of the coming of faithful mate, listen again! From the dim recesses to the north, somewhere among those bare and desolate slopes, the answer rises, quick, ringing, even imperative, and the signal reads, "This way."

Groping through the bitter darkness of the December night, a cavalry column has sought and, just at the opening of this cheerless December day, has found its mate. The comrade battalions of the Twelfth are within hail.

"Forward!" rings the signal from the southwest. Forward with them, then, around that point at the low bluff to our front, and in the ghostly, gathering light the scene is before us, the tale is almost told.

There, thickly dotting the prairie and covering the low ground, its wigwams smoke-begrimed and dingy, lies an Indian encampment; but even in such shelter as this the hostile horde has fared far better than they who through the long, freezing night have kept watch and ward lest again the wary chief should slip through the meshes. It has come at last. The big warrior's fanatical braves have made their rush, Berrien's men the tackle. Back flew the signal with the setting sun. Up through the night came Farquhar with "the guards."

Here in front the four old troops we know so well have shivered for hours about the village. Here, alert and determined, Rolfe and Hazlett, Thorpe and Gorham, have clung to front, flank, and rear, well knowing that so soon as the colonel got the news he would not only speed the second battalion on its way, but, gathering any other forces he could find, would ride the long night through, if need were, to join his men.

Stern and silent, Rolfe is standing at the bank of the stream, wearied enough, yet certain that there is no rest before them. On him, as senior, the command has devolved in the absence of the beloved major now being tenderly nursed and comfortably trundled homeward in the warm interior of a Pullman. No excitement, no cheer, attends the coming of the column now at steady, soldierly gait winding into

the shallow depression. Rolfe knows that without Farquhar and his reinforcements attack upon or interference with so formidable a band would be worse than desperation. He knows that with Farquhar his own position will be only that of subordinate, and that he must obey. He knows how, were he supreme, a thousand troopers at his back, he would conduct matters now. But Farquhar is a soldier long accustomed both to obedience and to command; Rolfe is one to whom obedience comes with laggard grace, to whom command is opportunity for lavish vent of his imperious will. Orders or no orders, if he had the power he would deal death to the rabid renegades before him. Orders to "bring on the Indians, but not bring on a fight," to his thinking are orders like those which should forbid a man's going to water until he had learned to swim. Orders to disarm but not molest are simply something to be laughed to scorn. When were the Sioux ever known to surrender those precious arms? Such things when reported in years gone by turned out to be as rusty shams as the arms turned in. Rolfe was in mood as sullen as the morn, and the signs about the now bustling village were not to his liking. Over among the tepees blanketed squaws were scurrying about, their shrill voices suppressed, but their black eyes flashing hatred at the silent squads of troopers, carbines ready in hand, watching every move within the guarded lines. Young women and boys were belaboring the gaunt and dejected ponies. Eager gestures and low exclamations called attention to the coming force, and in groups the warriors, shrouded to the very lips in their heavy robes, stood or sat in council; but all the while, darting from point to point, with fierce declamatory gesture went Mephisto himself in the Indian "medicine-man." Mark! wheresoever he goes eager ears are bent to hear his exhortation.

"My God! why can't I arrest him at least? With that old scoundrel done for, the rest might not be so hard," is Rolfe's impatient exclamation.

"Simply because the attempt would lead to instant fight," is Hazlett's cool reply.

"But, man, he's putting them up to organized resistance. He's giving them some instructions now; you can see it just as well as I do."

"Who doesn't? but——" A suggestive shrug of the shoulders indicates the brother captain's opinion. "You know the old saying, Rolfe, 'Ours not to make reply.'"

"Who's in command of those advanced men fronting that part of the village?" asks Rolfe, after a moment's gloomy pause.

"Brewster. Don't you see? He's talking with Sergeant Ellis there now."

Rolfe grinds his heavy boot-heel into the frosted bunch-grass, not more harshly than he grinds his teeth. "By heaven! Hazlett, bear me witness to this,—for there's no telling how things will turn out to-day,—if I had my way those two men would have been brought to book and made to explain, instead of having posts of honor here. Farquhar refused to listen to another word on the subject until we got home again; then it may be too late."

"Well-l, I can't understand what you have against them both,—or either," is Hazlett's reply.

"And I can't explain here or now; but wait till we're home again, Hazlett, if we ever get there."

Farther down to the left two other troop commanders have been watching the symptoms among the swarming lodges.

"There'll be the devil's work this day, Thorpe," says Gorham at last, with gloomy brow.

And Thorpe only bows his head.

Three hours later look upon the scene. The open prairie on the hither side of the village is no longer tenantless, as it was at dawn. Two parallel lines confront each other there. In dogged submission to the orders of their captors and the mandate of the big white chief which has been laid before them, silent, sullen, muffled to the eyes in dingy robe or blanket, the braves have slowly moved out from their lurking-places among the tepees and shuffled down the gentle slope until well away from the outskirts of their town, and just in front of a long, silent rank of dismounted troopers they squat upon the ground. No word is spoken by either side. Here crouch the savage leaders of the hostile tribe, and, in long-extended line, scores of their fiercest and bravest. Others still lurk among the squaws and lodges. Others peer with glittering, malignant eyes from under heaps of foul-smelling robes or *parfleches*. Those in the outing glance but furtively at the blue line before them. They are silent as the dead, yet the war-cry trembles on their lips. They wait, but wait expectant. They crouch, but it is the tiger's crouch, ready for a spring. The word has been passed that all

arms must be surrendered, and every arm is there, ready, hidden, but "with the lightning sleeping in it."

Back among those brown, dingy tepees, breathless with excitement, squaws are scurrying to and fro; children are being huddled away to the farther side. ("Look at that, Curly," mutters Warren, under his frozen moustache, as he passes rapidly along in rear. "Isn't that enough to show they mean mischief?") Some of the Indian police and interpreters are still searching for warriors in hiding. Yet has not the old chief bowed his assent to the orders and given his directions that his people should comply? Nothing must be—can be—done so long as the Indian makes no overt move. The dismounted men of two troops are in long single rank. Some of the men shiver a little, for cold and excitement are telling now, as in many cases overcoats have been thrown aside, but brave men tremble ofttimes until the first shot comes, and then the nervous strain is gone, for the hot blood leaps and tingles through the veins. Back some distance the horse-herders are aligned. Off to the flanks and rear comrade troops gaze silently on the scene. From the crest of a low bluff the black muzzle of the Hotchkiss gun peers from its knot of watchful batterymen. Farquhar, vigilant and grave, has just sent Warren with other orders. A half-breed Indian steps forth, as though to carry its import to the chief. At him the eyes of the old maniac of a medicine-man glare with tigerish fury. He lowers his feathered head. He crouches.

Then, suddenly, a cat-like leap, a wild yell. Off goes every blanket, as though hurled by the explosion from within. In simultaneous crash the flame and lead have leaped upon the trooper line, and now through the veiling smoke every Indian is fighting like a demon. Down goes many a sturdy soldier, veteran sergeant, brave-faced boy. The line reels with the sudden shock, but in an instant men like Thorpe and Brewster and Randolph leap forward among the men and their voices ring with the clamor of battle. Back up the slope, scurrying, stooping low, firing, dropping in their tracks, the Indians are making for the shelter of their tepees,—for the skirts of the squaws. What Sioux woman fears to die in defence of her brave? What Sioux warrior disdains to shield himself from foeman's blow and to shoot from the covert of the sheltering form of his devoted wife?

"For God's sake, men, head 'em off! Don't let them back among the women," is the yell. But Indian tactics, stooping to anything, stopping at nothing, are too much for men trained to fight only as

soldiers and gentlemen. Already squaws are rushing forward, knife and revolver in hand. Already the hidden savages are firing from under tent or *travois*. Already a score of the best and bravest of the Twelfth have bit the dust. Curly Brewster's arm is smashed by rifle-bullet; Thorpe, cheering on his men, heading them in their rapid return fire, plunges suddenly to earth with one gasping cry, "Oh, God! My little ones!" Rolfe, riding like mad a dozen yards ahead of his men in wild effort to cut off the backward move, tumbles in senseless heap at the very feet of a knife-wielding fury of a woman who is only laid low just as her clutch is on his hair, her gleaming blade at his throat. Ay, on this bleak and barren and cheerless field, under these leaden skies, beside the black waters, streaked now with curdling red, the battle-fiend is loose: there is, indeed, "the devil's work this day," but where the blame lies as between the soldier who must fight or die, and those who, far and near, East and West, so promptly lashed him as squaw-shooter, babe-slayer, let the God of battles decide.

XIV.

A month later, and Holden has his wounded safely housed under the roof of the hospital at old Pawnee, many severely shattered or suffering great pain. Many will bear to their dying day mementos of that savage December battle. Some of the twoscore are doing very well; others, perhaps, have done better, and are sleeping under the flag. A busy man is Holden, and a very proud one, as he has the right to be, for, one and all, the troopers love to speak of him as their "fighting sawbones." He was in the thick of it all when the rush of the rearward mounted troops swept into and through those fire-spitting lodges, and the Indians, warriors, squaws, and children, were scattering, fighting fiercely all the way, to the shelter of the ravines among the bluffs. Tireless as ever, he and his assistants are constantly at the bedsides of the wounded. So is the chaplain, one of the church militant, whose "soul's in arms and eager for the fray," for his friends of the Twelfth are under two fires. Gallantly and well have they withstood that which, with sudden treachery at the hands of their savage foes, flashed in their very faces. But they have no redress as against this—this civilized lashing at their very backs. The parson's *sermon Sunday morning* in answer to the drivelling sentimentality of

certain misguided ecclesiastics far from the scene of conflict almost lifted old Kenyon and his comrades out of their seats. The major hugged his chaplain after service and stopped to shake hands with him every time he met him during the afternoon. In many a pulpit east of the Missouri, with tearful fervor was the picture drawn of those helpless, pleading Indian mothers, those shrieking, terrified little Indian babes, ruthlessly slaughtered by a brutal and infuriated soldiery. Nor were the clergy without warrant for their "bottom facts," since in some mysterious way the representatives of the press, hovering about that impersonal section of military anatomy known as head-quarters, were flooding the columns of their journals with paragraphs about the wanton killing of women and children in the fight in front of the Twelfth. "Holy Joe," as the parson had been termed, knew well the day when, in the seclusion and simplicity of his seminary life, he would have swallowed whole just such statements and turned up the whites of his eyes in sympathetic horror at the recital. But the man of God on the banks of the Merrimac and his brother in the cross on the Upper Missouri see very different sides of the vexing Indian question. "Holy Joe" at Pawnee this sparkling month of January was mad clear through at the indignities and aspersions cast upon his blue-coated comrades. He wrestled with the brethren of his cloth and downed them. He even dared to establish a censorship of the press and to keep from the hands of his precious wounded those journals which had assailed the Twelfth.

He had had his hands full, poor fellow, long before the wounded came, for those were dire days and nights after the news was flashed to the post and the widowed and fatherless in their affliction were thrown upon his hands. Poor Mrs. Thorpe! Ah, she was only one of several. There was wailing among the wives and little ones down where once the soldiers' families were so thickly clustered. There were other households in dread anxiety. There were women broken down with grief and sleepless watching. There was one so ill she could not even now be told she would never look upon the face of her gallant soldier again. But draw the veil. It was on such bleeding hearts and on the men who bore the brunt of the fiercest fighting of the campaign that the lash of press and pulpit fell.

But old Kenyon was in his element. To the best and kindliest of men there is in being able to say "Didn't I tell you so?" a joy that surpasses the sweets of religious consolation. It was something to hear

him declaiming among the artillery and infantry officers during the days that followed the announcement of official investigation at the expense of the Pawnee battalions. "Why, gentlemen," said he, "I have never ceased to thank God I didn't take the chance for promotion that came in the reorganization twenty years ago. I was one of the senior captains of infantry then. I could have got one of those cavalry vacancies just as well as not,—been a yellow major ten years before the leaves dropped on my shoulders in the blue; but if by any chance I were ordered into the dragoons to-day I'd swap out or quit for good. From the time those Bloods and Piegans got their deserved thrashing at the hands of Tim Baker's battalion I've known enough to steer clear of it. You know those facts as well as I do. You know those Indians had been murdering, robbing, burning, pillaging, for two years. You know how all Montana begged and implored General Sheridan to put a stop to it. There was no catching them until winter, and then when he sent those Second Cavalry fellows up there with orders to thrash Sheol out of them, what was the result? Didn't the papers East and West turn to and damn him and them? Didn't they dub him 'Piegan Phil' from that time forth? No, sir, no cavalry service for me. There's only one thing harder than the knocks that they have been getting for the last twenty years on the frontier, and that's the knocks they've had to bear at home."

But towards the end of January the old post was beginning to pluck up heart again, and, to the keen delight of Mrs. Berrien and Winifred, their particular major was able to drive with them, bundled up in his furs, and lolling back in the cushions of Berengaria's barouche, as he termed his wife's comfortable carriage, with that rejoicing matron by his side, distributing smiles and sunshine and joyous nods of recognition wherever she went; everybody waving hand or hat or handkerchief as they bowled along, and Winifred—bonny Winifred—beaming upon her father from the front seat. Very, very sweet Miss Berrien was looking just now, said all who saw her; yet there was a shade of wistfulness in her face, a constant expression about those deep, dark eyes that seemed to tell they were ever on watch for one who never came. Shattered as was his sabre arm, Curly Brewster had scoffed at the idea of being sent back to Pawnee.

"What's the use?" he said. "I would be utterly alone there, while here I have all the fellows about me. What better care do I *need?*"

In the midst of all their trials and annoyances, in the thick of the whirl of events that followed their sharp and sudden fight, the officers and men of the Twelfth found themselves more closely drawn together even than before. Very little was said when outsiders were by as to the depth of feeling aroused in their ranks by the unaccountable criticism of the press. Very little had to be said in the official investigation of the affair to clear them, one and all, of the array of allegations lodged at their doors. But that every man, from the colonel down, bore away from the field of their winter's travail a sense of injury beyond the scar of savage missile, who could doubt?—who could blame? It did not prevent their having some quiet fun of their own, however. Gray-haired Farquhar was whimsical in his sympathy with Rolfe, whose scalp had been saved by the man of all others he had most reviled,—Sergeant Ellis. Randolph, from the recesses of the hospital tent, poked no end of gibes at Ridgeway, who had lost his eye-glasses in the morning fight and had been nearly run off with by the Sioux. As for Rolfe's plight, "he lost all the skin from the side instead of the top of his head," laughed Gorham. It was pitiable enough to make the boys forget the austerity of his past, for to his lying day Rolfe would carry the marks of his involuntary "scrap with a squaw," as Randolph termed it. "Rolfe's scars have come to the surface," chimed in Warren, who never could get along with him. They all hoped he would go back to Pawnee with the wounded train; and he did. So, too, did Ellis, wearing on the arm in a sling the new chevrons of a first sergeant, won, as said his colonel in presenting them, "together with the heartiest recommendation for a medal of honor I could write, for bravery on the field of battle." Rolfe turned his bandaged head away when Holden gave him all the story. He knew not what to think, much less what to say. Ellis had leaped through the swarm of fighting braves and with the butt of his carbine lashed aside the unsexed fiend whose clutching claws were in the captain's hair, and then had fought like a tiger over the prostrate body and saved the life of the man who had maligned him.

"One half-second more, and you were gone, Rolfe," said Holden, gravely.

"I never said he wasn't a fine soldier," answered Rolfe, faintly. "Perhaps I didn't know him aright."

"That isn't all there is to it, Rolfe," was the doctor's reply. "He is more than a soldier. He is a gentleman; and I know it."

Yet when Rolfe expressed a desire to see and speak with Ellis later he calmly begged the doctor to excuse him.

But just why Brewster would not go home with the wounded the boys couldn't quite understand. He would be off duty for months. He might not swing sabre again for a year. Miss Berrien was there in all readiness, no doubt, to thank him warmly for all he had done to save her and her mother from the blizzard, from the Indians, and heaven knows what all,—to bless him for his rescue of papa,—to beam upon him with those wondrous dark eyes, thought poor Ridgeway who felt somehow that, after all, his cake was all dough. And yet Curly wouldn't go. What was more, he had never so much as exchanged one word with Winifred Berrien from the moment of the discovery of the ambulance. It was "B throop," as Murphy said that had the honor of conveying the ladies on to camp and the bedside of the astonished major. It was a blow to Winifred to learn that within twelve hours after their arrival the old battalion had ridden away, Brewster with it.

"I know why Curly doesn't dare go back," said one of the sages of the bachelor mess. "He's afraid Knowles will come out and insist on lugging him off to town to be nursed under his roof, or else of her going out to nurse him. Begad! it may be tough, but it's a heap safer here." And so "Antinoüs" remained with his fellows in the wintry field, and old Berrien, who never could be got to write a letter to anybody, found he could stand it no longer. He bade Berengaria write and say—well, something; something really must be said about how they appreciated his conduct; "by-gones be by-gones;" something, anything; he didn't know; she did: she always knew just what to say. "So write, Bess."

"But I have, Dick."

"Berengaria! And without my consent?"

"Richard Plantagenet, Coeur-de-Lion, Tête-de-Veau, of course,—ten days ago."

"What did you say?"

"Everything that was proper, I trust."

"What did he say?"

"Nothing."

"Didn't he answer?"

"How could he, Dick? You can't with two hands; he has but *one, the left at that.*"

"He might have got somebody to write for him. I did."

"So did he."

"Thought you said he didn't say anything."

"Well, he didn't. He said everything that was gentlemanly, courteous, appreciative, and yet—nothing. A model letter, Dick."

"What does Winnie say?"

"Nothing."

"Didn't she see it?"

"Why should she, Dick? Two months ago you practically forbade their meeting."

"Oh, I know; but—I didn't know him then."

"Not even after seven years' service with him, Dick?"

"Oh, well, that—that party in petticoats there in town, I didn't know her as well as—well, as after I heard all about her from those fellows in the Eleventh."

"But I knew her, Dick, from the start."

"I know you did, Bess. You said so; and I suppose I've been an ass," said Berrien, ruefully.

"You sometimes do cross the danger-line, Dick dear. That is, when I let you."

The major had nothing to say in response to this accusation. He pondered in silence a moment. "Well, a fellow can change his mind, can't he, as well as a woman?"

"Not as well as a woman, Dick. Still, he can change. And suppose a certain fellow were to change his mind now and take six months' leave and go away to be cured?"

"What! Brewster change his mind?—about Winnie, do you mean? Why, confound him! I'd round him up so quick——The idea of his going back on Winnie! Why, if I thought such a thing possible I'd have him here on his knees at her feet inside of a week."

"Oh, no, you wouldn't, Dick," said she, laughing softly.

"Wouldn't? Why not?"

"Just because two women wouldn't let you,—I for one, Winnie for two."

"You still think she cares for him?"

"I won't answer that, Dick. But this," with sudden change from her laughing manner, "I will say: no matter what she cared or how she suffered, neither you nor I, Dick, nor any one on this wide earth, would ever wring one *word from* her lips."

And over at Holden's things were going on in an odd groove. was Kenyon who was a frequent visitor there now, not Rolfe. M Holden was still in St. Louis with her olive-branches, for the doc had frankly told her that just so long as he had all these wounded his hands the children would be in his way.

"He means me," said Jennie to Miss Guthrie, with prompt rese ment. "But he says next month he'll come on here,—business w require it as well as pleasure,—pay us a ten days' visit, and take home. Then you'll come too, won't you, Nita?" But Miss Guth shook her head.

"You promised us," said Mrs. Holden, reproachfully; "and Ro won't be there to worry you this time," she faltered. "He's going take a long leave and go abroad."

"But even that," wrote Jennie to her liege, "did not seem to co fort her. She says she will never, probably, visit Pawnee again; a I know well as can be it is all on account of that terrible frig What can there have been behind it all? Now that the Twelfth coming home and you have everything running smoothly, don't y think it possible to find out something about that strange affai You have never written a word, and I can see Nita's eyes questioni me every time she knows I have a letter. The other day I was in l room, and, looking over some old albums that I drew from the bott of a desk, I came across a picture of hers just like the one that is the little silver frame on the toilet-table in her room at Pawnee, exc that this was blurred and worn. 'Why, Nita!' I cried, unthinking as she entered, 'I thought you told me mine was the only one left this kind, and here's one that looks as if it might have been worn n some fellow's heart and kissed a million——' and then I stopped sh and dropped it, for she had turned white as death and was stretchi out her hands. 'Where did you find that?' she whispered at la 'Between the leaves of this old album,' I said. 'It was lying th loosely.' 'I had not seen it for six years. I thought I had burned with——' And then she broke off suddenly, and shuddered, but seiz it and took it away. If she would only talk to me of Jack; but s will not, even though I know that ever since the suicide of Mr. Perci last August Mr. Guthrie has been working day and night reopeni the old matter. All the friends of the Guthries are now more th ever confident that Jack was absolutely innocent,—that Mr. Perci *as president of the* bank had made away with those missing funds a

securities and charged it to Jack and to his friend Harold Worden. An effort has been made to get at Mr. Percival's papers, all of them, but his widow is still so broken that she cannot be seen by any one, say her physicians. It is believed she knows something of the inner history of the whole case, and that she is striving to hide what she knows for her children's sake. Of course people say she has behaved very ill,—that she ought to sell and restore to the bank real estate and property that from time to time Mr. Percival had settled upon her. But she only goes into hysterics when lawyers are mentioned. Mr. Guthrie is now in a highly nervous and excitable state, which naturally reacts upon Nita. I wish we could get her away from here. He went West, you remember, when he left her with us at Pawnee. He went in the hopes of finding some trace of Mr. Worden, so I learn now, and to urge the immediate return to St. Louis of Jack's old and intimate friend to demand justice at the hands of the Percivals, for he was ruined irretrievably by Percival's accusation when dismissed from the bank. But he has vanished utterly, and I know that they have about given him up for dead. A detective agency has been at work for months, and twice of late men have come to the house asking if it were not possible to find somewhere a picture of Mr. Worden; but Nita says none exist that she knows of. I believe that she burned all that she had.

"Why will she not trust me and tell me about it,—she who used to have no secret from me? We know that he was deeply in love with her, and that she was believed to care for him; but there was a fearful scene between him and Mr. Guthrie over poor Jack's body. The old gentleman was wild with grief, and in his misery he upbraided Worden as the cause of it all,—accused him of being the thief, and cursed him for concealing his crime at the expense of Jack's life and honor. Possibly he did believe it then; but since Percival's death everything is changed. I believe he would give all he owns to make amends to Worden now, and sometimes I think that that is what is killing Nita."

"'That that is what is killing Nita,'" read Holden again, this time half aloud, as he pondered over the words. Then a sound at the door attracted him. He glanced up quickly.

"Oh, come in, sergeant. I did not hear you knock."

"I beg your pardon, sir," was the answer in Ellis's deep voice, a faint flush rising to his pale, black-bearded face. "I knocked twice at the outer door, and then, knowing the doctor to be here, ventured into the hall. Am I too early, sir?"

"You are just in time. Come in. Shut that door and sit down. How's the arm to-day, Ellis?"

Obediently the tall trooper had stepped within and closed the door, but he still remained erect, a shade of hesitation in his manner. "The arm seems doing well, sir."

"And yet you yourself do not pick up as I could wish. Take that chair, Ellis; we shall not be interrupted, and I want to talk with you about your case. You have won honor and troops of friends in this campaign, and when the regiment gets back and they find you pale and languid, so utterly unlike yourself and unfit to take your duties as first sergeant, they will say I was at fault. Can't stand that, you know: so I have spoken to Major Kenyon about the matter, and he has directed that you move out of hospital forthwith and under my roof. No, keep your seat. You are to report to me for special duty in making up the field papers and reports, and I shall need you right here where I can supervise it all and look after you."

For a moment the two men sat gazing straight into each other's eyes. Then again, trembling slightly, Ellis strove to rise.

"Dr. Holden, I—I ought not to take advantage of this. Indeed, I cannot."

"That will do, sir," was the quietly smiling reply. "Orders are orders, sergeant, and, being a patient, you are doubly under mine. What's more, you can ask no question until that chevron is replaced by the shoulder-strap. *Ellis, under what name shall the officers of the Twelfth ask that you be made one of their number?*"

Making no reply, the sergeant bowed his head and covered his face with his hands.

Late that evening old Kenyon, dropping in to see the doctor, found the tall cavalryman seated at a desk in Holden's library, and, as he promptly arose and stood erect in acknowledgment of the presence of the post commander, the major strode straight up to him and held out his hand:

"Sergeant, I am as proud and pleased as your own father could be. When a whole regiment recommends a man for a commission, as this day's mail tells us, it's worth more than all the senatorial backing in Columbia. It may not fetch it, but I'd rather have it. Now, have you any friends to aid you?"

"None in the world, sir."

"*No relatives? no kin?* Not even a Congressman?"

"Not even a Congressman. A sister, perhaps; but that is all."

"Well, well, well! Never mind, though, my lad; we'll see you hrough. What you must do is get strong and well. You're but the ;host of yourself, and the doctor and I have moved you over here as ı matter we owe the regiment. I thought you were told to go to bed ın hour ago. Which is your room?"

"The doctor has given me the run of the top floor, sir, but mine is :he front room on this side," answered Ellis, gravely.

"Well, it's time for you to turn in: so I order it. Let me see. This is the 25th of January. A month from now, or two at most, I hope to see you with a strap on your shoulder, and long before that with the flush of health in your cheek. Now good-night to you, and pleasant dreams." And the major strode away.

Only an hour after sunset the silver disk of the moon had risen cloudless and unveiled, and now, as the bugle was calling the belated ones back to the post for night inspection of quarters, the burnished shield was high aloft, flooding the broad valley with its radiant sheen, throwing black shadows upon the broad road-way, the white picket-fence, the glistening verandas at the post. Holden, returning from a late visit to some of his patients at the hospital, stopped and looked quickly and intently up at the little gallery overhanging the eastward wall. In the front room, that which he had assigned to Ellis, a light burned dimly. The venetian window of the rear room leading to the gallery was dark, yet open, and on the little ledge, leaning against the casement, the moonlight gleaming on his face and form, a tall soldier was gazing intently eastward. Quietly Holden strode along, entered the gate, went noiselessly into the hall and up the stairs. The door from Nita's room to the landing stood wide open. At this juncture a person standing outside would have seen the silent occupant of "Robbers' Roost" turn with sudden start and peer into the room, for Holden, his eyes fixed upon the gleaming, glistening space between the two rear windows and just over the toilet table, had purposely dropped his heavy stick with resounding clatter upon the landing floor. "I thought so," he muttered, in serene satisfaction. Then, picking up his stick, he calmly strolled across the threshold and into the dark room.

"Beautiful view of a moonlight night, Ellis. That was Miss Guthrie's favorite perch when she was here."

XV.

A great city is draped in mourning. On every side, at half-staff, the national flag hangs limp and lifeless in the moist and misty air, as though of its own volition drooping in honor of the soldier dead. Under the sodden skies, through thronged yet silent streets, in long, long column chosen detachments of soldiery are leading to its final resting-place the shrouded clay of him who to such glorious purpose had led the Union blue in every field from the Mississippi to the sea, and who through long years of honored service ranked foremost on the rolls of the army,—foremost, perhaps, in the great heart of the people. For days, as though in sympathy with the wide-spread grief, the heavens have poured their floods upon the brown and leafless slopes. All nature seems plunged in wintry gloom. The black smoke from a host of stacks and chimneys has settled down upon the silent city, covering it like a pall. From North and South, from East and West, battalions and batteries, national and State, have been concentrating to take part in the last honors to the illustrious chief, and, dripping, yet disciplined, without the stir of martial music, the men have marched from the trains to the rendezvous assigned them about the town.

At last the hour has come. The weeping skies have checked their tears. The streets and sidewalks along the line of march swarm with citizens whose hushed voices and reverent mien speak eloquently of their sense of the national loss. From many a stately mansion and modest homestead out beyond the business section festoons of black are fluttering in the rising breeze, the flag is twined with crape, the windows, balconies, and steps are alive with spectators. And, far out on the westward avenue, on a sheltered portico that projects from a solid, old-fashioned residence of cut stone and almost overhangs the street, there is gathered a little bevy of fair forms and faces which we saw together for the first time that Indian-summery afternoon of the reception at Pawnee. The rapid trot of orderlies and mounted police, sent ahead to warn the populace off the street and back to the sidewalk, and the distant wailing of cavalry trumpets far down the avenue, have told that now the funeral column is approaching; and from the warmth of the cosey parlor, well wrapped in mantles and furs, the ladies have come forth into the chilly February day,—Mrs. Berrien, Mrs. Holden and her children, Winifred, whose soft cheeks are aglow and whose dark *eyes turn instantly, eagerly* towards the head of the advancing escort,

Nita Guthrie, pallid, languid when unobserved by her guests, yet brightening instantly, bravely, when addressed, and striving to be her old gracious, radiant self for the sake of these and other visitors from Pawnee; for the Twelfth has been detailed especially to lead the escort of the great commander, and all the way from the frontier and only a few days home from the stirring scenes of its fierce campaign the regiment has been brought hither by the orders of a general who knows their worth as well he knows their wrongs, and whose soldier heart has felt for them in all their trials. It was in his power to give this honor to others, but, though his own old regiment is within easy call, he means that the people shall see for themselves what manner of men are these whom press and pulpit have assailed and against whose fair fame the shafts of slander have been hurled, only to fall blunted and broken, or, like boomerangs, come hurtling back about the ears of the thrower. Vindicated by the verdict of his peers, doubly vindicated by the highest powers of the land, gray-haired Farquhar is chosen to command the escort, and, though the flower of the nation's soldiery marches in the funeral train this day, the eyes of all the gathered throng are strained to see and hail and honor the standard and the guidons of the men who bore the brunt of battle only two short months gone by.

And with the squadrons and the guns from Pawnee came such of the wounded officers as were well enough to be transported hither, and with them half a dozen of the ladies of the garrison. To the huge delight of the old battalion, two of whose troops are cruelly thinned in numbers now, the jovial major is permitted by Dr. Holden to mount "Old Glory" and take his position in front of the line. To the tremulous joy of Winifred Berrien, Mr. Brewster has telegraphed from Washington, whither he was summoned immediately after the close of the investigation at the agency, bidding them bring his horse and equipments, for even though he cannot draw sabre he means to ride with "the black troop" on this day of days. She has not seen him since that wonderful morning when, like a young snow-king, he burst through the fleecy barriers about them and stood before her rejoicing eyes their rescuer, her father's preserver, her lover, her hero; and ever since in his pride he has held aloof from her and all she holds dear. She can hardly hush the fluttering of her heart as now, near at hand, she hears the familiar strains of the trumpets of the Twelfth, still sounding the mournful dead-march. Other ladies of the Twelfth are here,—Mrs. Hazlett, Mrs. Gorham, and Mrs. Warren,

and small wonder can there be that their soft eyes fill with tears. Ever since the brief and bloody campaign the sad, solemn tones have been their daily music. The crape is not yet rusting on the sword-hilts of their lords, worn in honor of poor Thorpe and Rand and Burrows, when it is renewed for the general-in-chief.

And now the crowds have drifted back from the asphalt. The platoon of mounted police has slowly clattered by. Then in long rank, boot to boot, muffled in their blue overcoats, the yellow-lined capes turned back, led by their veteran chief and guiding their spirited grays with hardly a touch of rein, the trumpeters of the Twelfth cover the street from curb to curb, the brazen bells uplifted and pouring forth their mournful strains. A little space, and then, mounted on mettlesome bay in the rich housings of a general officer, there rides the marshal of the parade, followed by rank after rank of staff-officers, all in the sombre dark blue of the service. The autumn frosts of a vigorous life have silvered the strands at his temple and tinged with ruddy glow the cheeks of that firm and soldierly face, but the eyes gleam clear and keen as ever they shone a quarter-century ago, when he and Farquhar spurred through the misty forest-aisles about Dinwiddie and led the cheering troopers to the charge on Pickett's crouching line at the Forks. He knows the fair party on the Guthrie balcony at a single glance, and touches the visor of his forage-cap as he moves slowly by, then summons an aide, gives him a low-toned order, and the officer reins aside to let his comrades pass, then jogs back down the avenue to meet the column. And now necks are craning on every side, and a murmur runs along the crowded banquette,—

A murmur that fain would break forth in a cheer,

but for the solemn occasion of their coming. Eyes gleam and brighten; lips stir with inarticulate greeting; hands, kerchiefs, and hats are waved in voiceless acclaim. Any other time, and all the great city would burst into tumultuous cheer, for here rides gray-haired Farquhar at the head of his staff, and just behind them, commanding the Twelfth, still pallid from his wounds, but erect and soldierly as ever, the senior major, dear old Berrien, lowers his sabre in acknowledgment of the salute of the aide, bends his ear to listen to the message, glances quickly at the balcony into the smiling face of his wife, meeting Winifred's dark and glowing eyes, but shakes his head, motions to Dr. *Holden, who is at his* left rear, and ambles on. Holden nods appre-

ciatively on receipt of what seems to be a similar message, reins out of column, followed by his orderly, dismounts at the side street, and presently is standing by his wife's side, welcomed most cordially by Miss Guthrie to the now crowded balcony. In column of platoons stretching from walk to walk, clear across the street, ranks carefully aligned, every man's head and eyes straight to the front, the leading troops of the Twelfth are now clinking steadily by. Hazlett has glanced out of the corners of his eyes at the lovely picture on the gallery, but, riding at the attention as they are, and on duty, he makes no sign. Randolph and Ridgeway, heading their platoons, strive to do two things at once,—look as though they saw and appreciated the fluttering greetings of hand and handkerchief and smiling eyes to their right, and still look as though they did not see it at all. The sorrels, the grays, have gone by, the bay troop is passing, and now yonder comes Gorham over on the other side of the street, the nearest he can get to his regulation position of four yards to the left of his leading platoon, and out from the sheltering screen of tree-branches and in front of the centre of the first subdivision of the blacks, his sabre arm still in its sling, his face pale with confinement and suffering, but tall and stalwart, rides Curly.

"Oh, there's Mr. Brewster! Mr. Brewster! Oh, why *doesn't* he look?" cries Miss Guthrie, as the handkerchiefs begin waving furiously, and fair, eager faces press forward in the effort to attract his attention, —all but Winifred, who, though bravely smiling like the rest, is clutching with trembling hands the back of her mother's chair and shrinking behind her mother's form. It is impossible for him not to see the fluttering signals. He half glances towards that thronging gallery, and in a second the light leaps to his eyes, a flush to his pallid cheek. Instinctively his arm twitches in the effort of the hand to reach the cap-visor, and the instant twinge of shooting pain brings him to his senses. He has one brief, fleeting look, however, at the beaming face he loves, and he has just time for a half-gesture with the bridle-hand, a little nod, and then, as on he rides, he feels rather than sees that one sweet face that beamed upon him has suddenly paled, that one graceful form is now staggering back into Holden's waiting and expectant arms. Only two platoons in the black troop to-day, for the others sleep beneath the wintry sod or still languish in the hospital ward. Only two platoons. Brewster heads the first; a tall, dark-eyed, dark-moustached sergeant *the second.*

"There's Sergeant Ellis!" cries Mrs. Berrien, in her pride and pleasure. "And he's shaved off his beard! Did you ever see him look so young and well?"

But Mrs. Holden, too, has turned, and does not heed. Her watchful eyes, her attentive ears, have other work to do. Obedient to her husband's touch, she has drawn close to his side. It is into her arms and his that, with one quick, gasping, stifled cry, Nita Guthrie has fallen as though stricken by a bolt from heaven. It is by these loving arms the limp and prostrate form is quickly borne within and laid upon the sofa, and Holden whispers to his devoted wife, "It is all clear now."

That night, the long ceremonies of the day concluded, a throng of fair women and brave men are gathered in the parlors and corridor of the great hotel. Down in the marbled court below, some Italian musicians are playing soft, sweet music. Out in the street, under the glare of the electric light, a fine regiment of State troops has drawn up in long-extended line and is standing at ease while its officers are bidding farewell to a host of friends upon the walks below. Here and above are soldiers of all branches of the service, who with the morning's sun will be scattering to their stations again. Some are clustered in the broad vestibules and on the office floor. Others, the juniors mainly, are paying their respects to the wife of the commanding general and to the ladies of the Twelfth, for on the morrow they too, with the regiment, take flight for their prairie home. The hour is late, and several of those present have just come in from a somewhat subdued and quiet entertainment given in their honor at one of the beautiful homes of the city. The solemn nature of the duty that has called them hither precludes the possibility of any general gathering, but the dinner to which the Berriens and others were bidden has lasted so long that Winifred began to believe it would never end, and Mrs. Berrien has seen all too plainly that, though she strove to appear joyous and appreciative, her daughter longed to leave the scene and return to the hotel, where, as was well known, many of the officers were to spend the evening. Not until nightfall had the Twelfth passed by on its return from the march to the distant cemetery, and as they jogged along at ease one or two of the troop or platoon commanders, in answer to joyous hail from the sidewalk, had reined out of column by old Berrien's permission and dismounted under the portico, but Brewster, smiling, had shaken his head and gone on with

his blacks to the muddy cantonment far down at the southern verge. Winifred was already dressed for dinner. She had hastened to her room as soon as they returned from the Guthries', and Mrs. Berrien made no comment. She well understood that the girl's one thought was to be ready to welcome if he should come: there was no telling at what minute he might be announced. And, though they were not to leave the hotel until nearly seven, Winifred was ready at four. The mother heart yearned over her child as she saw how the shadows deepened in her dark eyes when the column went on out of sight in the wintry gloaming, Brewster with it. At that moment she could almost share her husband's idea of bringing the young man to his knees then and there. What business had he playing the indifferent in this utterly unsoldierly fashion? How dare he treat Winifred with coldness? She had done him no wrong. Not since that night of the last hop at Pawnee, the night the marching orders came, had there been opportunity for the girl to speak to him at all. Of course the major had been brusque and repellent, and had virtually forbidden his further attentions; but, heavens, that was not Winifred's doing, and both the major and herself had endeavored to show him, without unnecessary allusion to the matter, that, whatsoever might have been the suspicions or impressions aroused by the singular conduct of that middle-aged married flirt at Pawnee, they no longer entertained the faintest ill opinion of him. Indeed, Mrs. Berrien never had. Blue-blooded herself, her faith in *bon sang* was deep-rooted. She had always liked Brewster, but she was a loyal wife and would in no wise act counter to her husband's wishes. It was now, when Mr. Brewster seemed allowing his pride and resentment to prompt him to this undeserved and cruel wounding of her daughter's heart, that Mrs. Berrien first felt any unkindliness. She could have made him suffer for it, but that she knew it would hurt Winifred as well. Without a word, but just so soon as the last of the yellow cape-linings disappeared from view, Winifred had turned from the parlor and again sought her room. Mrs. Berrien sent a bell-boy for Mr. Randolph, who, having dismounted at the entrance, was standing, the centre of a group of friends, in the marble-floored office below, and Randolph came up with the next trip of the elevator.

"Do you go with us to the dinner at the A——s' to-night, Mr. Randolph?"

"No, Mrs. Berrien; I believe only those who are so fortunate as

to be the husbands of certain ladies of the Twelfth are bidden. We are going to have a little gathering here to see Curly off."

"And where does Curly go?—and when?"

"Back to Washington by the first train, Mrs. Berrien. He's been offered a detail at the War Department."

"How delightful that is for Mr. Brewster! Why, the Twelfth is getting some little recognition, after all. Up to this moment the general's welcome home is the only word we've had from a soul. Then you'll all be here to-night, will you?"

"Most of us. Rolfe's here, too," laughed Randolph, "but he sat in a deep window during the procession and doesn't mean to show in public yet. I'm told he wants to make up with Curly before he goes to-night, but Curly won't let him." And Randolph knit his brows. "I wouldn't if I were Brewster. Wouldn't it be odd if they took the same train, though? I suppose he won't care to exhibit that new cheek of his to Miss Guthrie. Will she be here after the dinner?"

"I doubt it, Mr. Randolph. Miss Guthrie is not at all well. She had a sinking-spell of some kind this afternoon during the parade, and has not left her room since. Say to Mr. Brewster for me that we shall hope to see him before he leaves, will you? We'll be back about ten o'clock."

But it is after ten, long after, that now they are gathered in the parlors, and music, laughter, and the sound of merry voices ring through the wide corridors. Winifred, the wistful look gone from her dark eyes, a soft flush on her cheek, is standing near one of the high windows, the centre of a group of ladies and officers, among whom at this moment is Brewster, his right arm still in its sling. Though she strives, after her first fluttering welcome, not to glance at him again, just now at least, she cannot quite control her eyes. She cannot but mark with shy delight how her father's broad palm is laid upon her hero's shoulder, as the veteran trooper looks into the younger soldier's face with an expression she is thankful to see. All around the big, stiffly-furnished, formal room, with laughter and with gladness old friends are meeting again for the first time in years,—one at least of the joys of our nomad army life. The buzz of conversation, the remarks of Mr. Ridgeway, who clings to her side, and the sweet, thrilling strains of "Rigoletto," floating up from the rotunda, fall upon listless ears. Winifred is striving to catch his words, for now her *mother has joined* them, and her cordial, kindly voice mingles with

those about her. She cannot hear what is said, except in mere snatches, a word here and there, but she can and does see that, though thoroughly courteous, Brewster is dignified, almost unresponsive. When her father makes some jovial allusion to his narrow escape at the Porcupine and would apparently refer to Brewster's rush to the rescue, the latter seems to wave it aside and turn at once to another subject. Why will he be so—so unlike his old self?

Hark! From the street below the ringing call of the bugle! Randolph pokes his head in through the other window:

"Come out, all of you. Come and see them march away." It is that handsome regiment from the Queen City. And in a trice, men and women, they are pouring out upon the roof of the portico.

"Come along!" shouts old Berrien. "Come along! Let's give 'em a cavalry send-off." And away he goes at the heels of the throng. "Come, Berengaria, you want to see this regiment, I tell you. It's a beauty. And such a band!" But Berengaria holds back an instant.

"Winifred, dear, your wraps are not here, and I fear it is too chilly for you."

"Oh, I'll throw my cape over her," bursts in Ridgeway. "Just the thing!—Come, Miss Berrien.—Where's your cape, Curly? You bring Mrs. Berrien, will you?" And, rejoicing in his finesse, Mr. Ridgeway offers his arm.

"My cape's down-stairs in the office," answers Brewster, shortly.

"Yes, and whatever you do, Brewster, don't you go out in the night air without it," quietly remarks Dr. Holden at this juncture, as he follows the party.

"Orders are orders," laughs Mrs. Berrien. "Sorry for you, Mr. Brewster, but you'll have to see them through our eyes.—Yes, thank you, Mr. Ridgeway," as she possesses herself of that young trooper's arm, "I shall be very glad of your cape." And Ridgeway, with one stupefied backward glance, recovers himself and goes.

Winifred is still standing by the curtained window, half hidden by the projection of the chimney and its marble mantel. Very, very lovely she is in her dinner toilet, a simple gown, clinging in its soft, creamy folds about her slender form, a necklace of rare pearls, a beautiful quaint old heirloom, looped below her fair, rounded throat, its pendant rising and falling rapidly, unevenly now, for her heart is throbbing hard. One moment Brewster hesitates, casts a quick glance around, then steps forward to her side.

"Possibly we can see from this window, Miss Berrien," he says, as he raises the shade. And together they disappear into the curtained alcove.

But they cannot see. This window, like the other, looks upon the roof of the portico, and the backs of their numerous friends are visible, but not the street,—not the departing soldiery in whom such interest is felt. It is chilly here by the cold, glassy barrier. A bright coal-fire is blazing in the grate. Both have been warned not to take cold, yet neither seems to think of that fire.

"No, I'm afraid we can't see them here," says Winifred, inanely. "But won't you go and get your cape?"

"I saw them to-day, and I can see them again to-morrow."

"To-morrow? Where?" And now the dark eyes, full of trouble, glance quickly up.

Hear those sounds from below! The shrill voice of the colonel: "Column of fours. Break from the right to march to the left." The inevitable boom, boom, br-r-oom, boom, boom, of the drums. Loud plaudits and cheers from the crowd. Lively applause from the portico. Low voices are indistinguishable here at the window. Brewster pulls down the shade; it may shut out the noise, thin as it is, and, so long as one can't see anything, why have it up?

"Where?" she repeats. "I thought they went East, and that we——" But she gets no further. The pearl pendant is rising and falling like a storm-tossed shallop. Her slender fingers are nervously twisting and untwisting her filmy handkerchief. Tramp, tramp, tramp, echoing the drum-beats, the column of fours is striding away down the applauding thoroughfare. Then, as the band clears the left flank of the line and opens out across the street, joyous, spirited, ringing, it bursts into martial song. Where had she heard that introduction before? Surely there's something familiar. But she has no time to think of that now.

"I supposed—you never cared for—detached service," she falters. "But—is it your wound?"

He shakes his head:

"Three months ago I would not have left the regiment. Now I am better anywhere away from it."

Oh, Curly, Curly! "What fools these mortals be!" You should have sense enough to see how utterly the situation has changed. You *ought to know that* something more than gratitude has prompted all

old Berrien's clumsy efforts at cordiality. You ought to see by Mrs. Berrien's unaffected kindliness that the cloud has been dispelled. Why stand in your own light, a victim to this bumptious pride, striving to persuade yourself that had it not been for the fortunes of war her father would have interposed to-day as sternly and positively as he did before, and she—she would probably have as meekly, tamely submitted as she did that bitter night of parting at the gate? Can you never forgive that unresponsive hand, that half-shrinking, constrained good-by?

He is silent, waiting for her reply. He will not look at her, for her beauty dazzles, almost drives him wild with passionate love and longing. He has worshipped her, adored her as loyal knight might worship his queen of love and beauty. Down in his heart of hearts her image has lived through every instant of the fierce campaign, and reigns there now, rebel against it though he may. Her silence daunts him. If he had thought to pique or trap her into questioning, it was unworthy of his love and her. Her little hands are clasping now. She has started, raised her head, is listening intently. Absorbed only in her, in his love, in his wrongs, Brewster has lost all ear for the thrilling, martial music growing fainter and fainter down the street, but the look in her sweet face startles him. The color has fled. The dark eyes are dilating. One little hand is uplifted, as if to ward off any other sound. Borne on the night wind the strains come full and rich upon the ear. No wonder the girl is silenced, stunned. Oh for the clasping mother's arms now! Oh for the love, the wordless sympathy, that was hers that cold, gray wintry morning when the battalion with its loved ones strode buoyantly away down the winding road at Pawnee! All the heart-breaking sorrow, all the vague, throbbing, quivering pain, come back to her again as now she leans breathless against the casement, listening to the same sad, sweet, tearful old song,—

Love not, love not, ye hapless sons of clay!

One instant only she stands trembling there, then a great sob surges up in her throat, and, burying her face in her hands, she bursts away, she runs she knows not whither. Out into the deserted corridor, along the carpeted aisle, she speeds. Then to her left, wide open, brightly lighted, she spies the elevator, and, with the leap of hunted hare to its form, she springs within. No one there. She tries to shut the sliding door, but now some one *is* there,—Brewster,—and his one arm is too

strong for her two. An instant more and he is with her, blessing the fates that had carried off the attendant for a surreptitious look at the departing regiment. With quick decision Curly pulls the starting-rope, and, when the car has glided softly upward just half-way to the next floor, checks its motion, then springs to her side. Never till that instant had he known the full misery of a crippled and useless arm.

"Winifred, sweet one, listen!" he cries, seizing a slender wrist and striving to draw her hand away, as, sobbing, she crouches in the corner of the cage, while his brave young heart is thumping with a joy and exultation it never knew before. His blue eyes are aflame with love and gladness.

"Listen! Don't cry so! I must tell you."

R-r-r-r-ring! goes the confounded elevator-bell. She springs to her feet, stifling her sobs, conquering her womanly weakness.

"Oh, *do* let me out!" she cries, dashing away the tears.

"I won't," he answers, with such joyous, teasing triumph in his deep tones. "Though a million men a minute ring that bell, I'll never let you go now,—never. You cruel, wicked, heartless girl, you sent me away——"

"Oh, do let me out, Mr. Brewster!" she pleads. "Indeed you must." (R-r-r-r-r-ring.) "There's that awful bell again."

"You sent me away," he calmly continues, while his eyes dance and gleam, "utterly miserable because of your coldness and constraint. You knew I worshipped the very ground you stood upon. You knew I loved you better than anything in the wide world——" (R-r-r-r-r-r-B-r-r-r-r-r-*ring!*)

"I *must* go," she pleads, struggling hard to free the hand he has clasped. "Oh, do, Mr. Brewster!"

"You shall,—you shall, the very instant you have paid toll, Miss Berrien," he laughs, low. (R-r-r-r-r-r B-r-r-r-r-ring!) "I'll put you out on any floor you wish when you have said just two words."

"Oh, quick! *Do* let me go!" And she makes a frantic lunge at the starting-rope, but too late. His daring arm is round her now. He can use but one, and that has enfolded and drawn her close to his breast. The clatter of the bell is deafening. "Oh, please," she murmurs, struggling in vain, and glancing up in his glorified face.

"Not until you say, 'Yes, Carroll.' Now, quick! Winifred, do you love me, just a little?" No answer. Head bowed again, and now on the only available resting-place. (B-r-r-r-r-r- B-r-r-r-r-r-

B-r-r-r-r-RING!) "I can't hear," he laughs low and joyously, and the blond head bows until the curling moustache is sweeping her flushed and tear-wet cheek. "Did you speak, Miss Berrien?"

"Yes, Carroll." A mere whisper.

"Louder, please, Miss Berrien." Oh, what eloquence there is in that one clasping arm!

"Oh, *please* let me go! Yes, *yes!* YES!—if I must." And then the bell rattles madly, but unavailingly, and for the instant neither hears. For the instant she can speak no more, for the soft, red lips are sealed.

Two minutes later, as that brightly-lighted car glides down and comes to a stop at the parlor floor, a flushed and wrathful youth confronts the tall cavalryman who calmly steps forth as though on air and holds out a warning hand.

"Young man, if ever I hear of you quitting your post again and allowing a novice to get caught between floors you'll get into trouble. It's lucky for you I'm the only one who can tell anything about it this time." But the wrath is gone, and with bulging eyes the boy glares at the round gold piece in his palm, then at the vanishing lieutenant, and then into the empty car.

Homeward bound! The horses are all aboard. The second battalion has steamed away. Berrien's men from the car windows are answering the cheers of the crowds of citizens assembled to see them off. The ladies, safely ensconced in the cosey interior of the Pullman, are saying adieu to the number of friends, army and civilian, who have accompanied them to the train. The conductor has just reported "All ready, sir," to Major Berrien, who goes back in command, and Winifred, clinging to her mother's side, peers eagerly over the heads of the surrounding throng. Holden signals to his better half to come off, unless she prefers going back to Pawnee without him, and with much laughter and playful effort to keep her aboard, in which the jovial major is most prominent, that popular young matron is finally lifted from the rear platform. Mr. Ridgeway, who has attached himself to Miss Berrien's side, becomes suddenly aware that she has disappeared and returned to the interior, also that Curly Brewster, waving a brown telegraph envelope over his head, has shouldered his way into the crowd and is making for the car. "Wants another good-by word, I suppose," growls Ridgeway to himself, in deep disgust, yet comforted

with the thought that the train will be off in a moment, leaving Brewster behind. Far forward a bell begins to ring, the steam to hiss; the couplings of the box-cars jerk and strain; the horses snort and stamp in their wooden cages; the motion reaches the rear of the train, and the Pullman leaps forward with sudden start, then settles into slow, gentle glide along the polished rails.

"Tumble off, Brewster!" shouts Ridgeway, in feverish anxiety. "You'll be carried away if you don't."

"Shut up, Ridge," whispers Randolph, unsympathetically. "He's carried away for good. It's you that's left."

"Why, hello! here's Brewster!" booms the major, as he enters the sunshiny car, when at last the crowded station has faded from view. "Thought you were ordered to Washington, lad? Changed your mind, eh?—What, Berengaria?"

"Be quiet, Dick," whispers his smiling wife. "He hasn't changed his mind. Neither has Winifred."

But Holden is not the only one of the Pawnee party who remains. Sergeant Ellis has a furlough to visit Louisville, and is to take the train thither. In his cavalry uniform he was at the station to see his comrades safely started, and the last cheers of the troopers were for him, as he stood with kindling eye and flushing cheek, the centre of a crowd of curious citizens. As the train disappears around the distant curve, Holden touches his shoulder.

"At noon, Ellis?"

"At noon, sir," is the prompt response; and the sergeant recovers himself, and, springing to attention, raises his hand in salute. Holden smiles.

"I fancy that's about the last time you'll be doing that sort of thing," he says, significantly.

"You may rest assured that the impulse will remain, doctor. It is the outward sign of an inward respect that every day has only served to strengthen."

At noon Holden is at the hotel with a carriage, and Ellis, transmogrified, a decidedly distinguished-looking civilian, steps forth from the vestibule and joins the doctor.

"To Warren L. Guthrie's office," is the brief order, and the carriage rolls rapidly away.

"Mrs. Holden is with Miss Guthrie now," says Holden, after a *moment's silence.* "As yet she is to be told nothing,—as you desire;

but should we hear favorably as to the commission before our return to Pawnee—— ?" he asks, tentatively.

"No, doctor. If we meet again it must be as I was, not what this campaign has made me."

"What you have made yourself, man! Don't talk of it in that way. The Lord made you a gentleman. You made yourself a soldier."

Ellis smiles.

"A gentleman despite night prowling and petty larceny?"

"Well," says Holden, "that's something I leave you to settle with her. It seems you only carried out a fair warning, though of course you had no idea of the ghastly effect it would have. But you never told me how you reached that balcony."

"Easily enough, doctor. I simply took a light rope and grappling-hook from the fire-house, climbed up the rear porch at the end away from where Kathleen and Murphy were, went along the south slope of the main roof to the chimney, slung the rope about it and lowered myself gently to the balcony, then threw off my overcoat and stood at the open window. She had gone, and I thought I was too late, but, catching sight of the very picture whose return she had demanded and which I had sworn to have again as well as to see her, I was just entering, when I heard her step upon the stairs. I did not see her. I do not see how it was possible for her to see me; yet there came that scream of terror and the fall and then the rush. It all flashed over me in an instant that I had been guilty of a mad-brained prank,—that it would never do to be caught there; it could never be explained. I was up on the roof in a second, snatched away the hook and rope, crouched down to the back porch, waited a moment for Murphy and Kathleen to run inside, then slid to the ground, hid the rope under the wood-pile in the dark cellar, squeezed through a gap in the fence into the captain's yard next door,—they were all over at the Hazletts',—then donned my overcoat and joined the men running up from the laundresses' quarters. Late at night, as the sentry told Captain Rolfe, I went back, ostensibly to get my pipe, and recovered the rope and hook. That was all."

Holden ponders a moment:

"My wife has told me what she knew of your interview with Mr. Guthrie after poor Jack's death; but Miss Guthrie would never speak of what passed between herself and you."

On the pale, clear-cut face the lines of care and sorrow and privation seem to deepen. The shadows darken about the mournful eyes.

"I suppose I should never have blamed her as I did," he answers, "but I was mad with grief over Jack, with helpless, hopeless indignation over Percival's accusation; and then, of all others, to have her turn against me as she did,—that was the bitterest cup! Her father's influence in her over-wrought condition was what did it, I suppose; but she drove me from her sight as though I were indeed a felon, demanded the return of every line and trinket she had ever given me,—even that prized little *carte de visite* I had carried about me for a year. It was then, when she declared she would never look upon my face again, that I went wild with misery, or despair, I suppose. I swore that sooner or later she should see me, and that before I died her picture would be back here in its old place, and then I left her. God knows, the experiences of the years that followed might have knocked the romantic nonsense out of any man. My poor sister seemed to be the only one who had any faith left in me. I wandered all over the West as Ralph Erroll, mining, 'grub-staking,' working like a dog. I was starving in the Hills when Brewster came to my aid. I couldn't take his money without telling him something of my story, but I gave no names. He doesn't know to-day anything about the old trouble,—doesn't dream that he well knows the people who were once my most cherished friends. It was through him I enlisted, and within three months a mine I had located and yet couldn't sell for a dollar began to pay. By the time we reached Pawnee my half-interest in it proved worth all my years of toil. Then I thought to see her again,—took my furlough at the very time her father was West trying to find me and undo the wrong he had done, and—you know the rest. She was here, and I returned only to learn that she was about to leave and that Captain Rolfe was her accepted lover. Bearded, aged, uniformed as I was, I believed she would not know me even if we were to meet face to face; and believing, more, that no vestige of the regard she once felt for me remained, believing, too, that she was to marry Captain Rolfe, I was bitter, brutal, mad enough to strive to carry out my vow. Twice I had seen her on that balcony on the moonlit evenings, and I determined that the night of her departure she should see me for the last time. You know the rest. I shaved clean, so as to look as much as possible as I did in the old days, wore my civilian dress, and—nearly killed her."

"It was a fearful experiment," says Holden, gravely. "About the *maddest thing you* could have done."

"I *was* mad, doctor, when I heard she was to marry him. God nows I have realized it daily, hourly, ever since. And, yet, how ›uld she have seen me? She never reached the door."

"Simplest thing in the world. Nothing but the old principle in ptics,—the angle of incidence and the angle of reflection. That ıirror over the toilet table did the job. I saw you in the moonlight t the balcony window when you couldn't see me in the dark hall, and either of us could have seen the other had the mirror been away. low here's Mr. Guthrie's. Mind you, you've got to make amends for ıat hare-brained performance at Pawnee: so no word of reproach to im. He's old and broken."

Three minutes later the clerk has retired, after ushering Holden and is friend into the private office. The instant the latch has clicked, a ray-haired, sorrow-stricken man, tears standing in his fading eyes, ands quivering and trembling, totters forward, and might have fallen ut for the strong arms that catch and clasp him.

"My boy's friend! my boy's friend,—whom I so wronged!" he ılters, and then for a while there is solemn silence.

"Is Mr. Percival's confession complete, and have you seen it?" sks Ellis, gently.

"I have, my boy, at last."

"And it clears me, Mr. Guthrie?"

"Utterly and entirely," the old man cries. "I thank my God I ras wrong!—I was wrong!"

One scene more. Pawnee again. The night train has come from he East. Holden's carriage is at the station, and so is Brewster.

"All right?—all arranged?" whispers the doctor, as he springs rom the car and grasps the lieutenant's hand.

"All right! Kenyon's just left him," answers Curly, and then ıusies himself lifting the merry children from the step, welcoming Mrs. Holden, and carefully assisting Nita Guthrie to the platform.

"You happy fellow!" she murmurs. "How can I congratulate ou? It's announced, is it not?" And for a moment she seems, espite pallor and fatigue, the old buoyant, radiant Nita.

"Announced?" answers Curly. "My mother-in-law elect—God ıless her!—says my face announced it before that elevator could reach he lower floor."

They drive rapidly up the winding road, and, though plainly

nervous and excited, the fair guest never loses her presence of mind. She has something appreciative to say as they pass each familiar object,—the lower gate, where the spruce sentry stands at a carry in salute; the guard-house, where the relief is just forming; the broad west gate; the brightly-lighted barracks across the parade; the group of trumpeters in the moonlight out under the tall, glistening flag-staff. Then come the rush of Murphy and Kathleen to open the door and assist them to alight; the rapturous greeting between the children and their Hibernian friends; the fragrance of coffee floating in from the kitchen; the hickory logs snapping and sparkling in the fireplace; the old familiar rooms; the swinging lamp in the hall.

"Welcome to Pawnee once more, Nita," says Holden, clasping both her hands. "We've had enough of pale cheeks and drooping spirits. We've brought you here to recall the roses,—to win you back to joy and health, and to your own old room, Nita. Now, will you promise not to faint this time, no matter what spooks you see?"

She is trembling violently. She looks into his beaming face with eager, questioning, imploring eyes.

"Come, dear," whispers Mrs. Holden. "I'm going up with you."

The doctor summons the children into the dining-room to see the lovely flowers on the table. Mrs. Holden twines her arm about her cousin's waist, and up the stair they slowly go. Nita trembles more and more. They are within a few steps of the landing, and as they come in sight of the open door Nita shrinks closer to her cousin's side. Three steps more, and in the dark chamber there gleams that silvery shield of mirror between the dim white curtains, reflecting the dazzling moonlight from without. They reach the landing, and Miss Guthrie pauses, breathless, unnerved. She can go no farther.

"Nita, it was no ghost you saw," whispers Mrs. Holden. "Shall I call him?"

One instant the blue eyes dilate, wild with hope, incredulity, joy, and fear, all intermingled. Then there is the sound of quick, springing step along the hall. A tall, dark-haired, dark-eyed soldier fairly leaps towards them. Nita turns quickly at the sound, and then with outstretched arms throws herself forward to meet him. No terror, no anguish now, but, as she is clasped to his heart, joy unutterable in her stifled cry, in the one word,—

"Harold!"

THE END.

AN ARMY PORTIA.

AN ARMY PORTIA.

I.

[T must have been nearly midnight. The lights in the barracks and at the old hospital beyond had long since been extinguished, and only here and there along the row of officers' quarters and at the guard-house, suggestively planted half-way down the slope towards the post trader's store, was there sign of wakeful life. One or two upper windows gave forth a feeble gleam, and there was quite a jovial glow pouring from the open door-way of the colonel's big house across the dark rectangle. It fell upon the tall white flag-staff and displayed it from base to cross-trees, a solitary, ghost-like shaft, and then, with gradually diminishing power, illumined the gravelled pathway that bisected the parade and led from the broad flight of steps in front of the commanding officer's to the major's quarters on the southern side. Overhead the stars were glittering in an absolutely cloudless sky. Not a breath of air was stirring the forest down in the black depths of the valley to the south. Softened by distance, the rush of the river over its rocky bed fell upon the ear like soothing lullaby. Ten minutes earlier the sound of silvery laughter and cheery voices had come floating across the garrison, and half a dozen little groups had strolled away from the colonel's gate, some turning to right and left, others crossing in the broad stream of light from his open portals. One by one the doors of the various quarters had opened to admit their occupants, a few lingering good-nights had been exchanged between gallant young bachelors and some dainty form enwrapped in fleecy burnous, and then even those night-owls "the youngsters" had betaken themselves to their domiciles; one after another doors were closed, lights popped up in the second-floor windows, curtains were drawn, the lights enshrouded, and finally a silence as of solitude spread its mantle over the parade, and the corporal of the guard, leaning against the gate-post at the south-

western entrance, bethought him how expressive was the sign the Indians made for night.

He was of medium height, but an athletic, well-built young fellow, as any one might have seen as the corporal stood under the big lamp at the guard-house but a few moments before. He had a handsome, clear-cut face, with a good deal of soldier bronze about the cheeks and jaws; he wore his natty undress uniform with an easy grace, and carried the long Springfield as though it were a toy. The crossed rifles on his forage-cap, the buckle of his cartridge-belt, even the copper cartridges themselves, gleamed in the lamplight. The chevrons on his sleeve, the narrow stripe along the seam of his trousers, the Berlin gloves he wore, were all spotlessly white; and Corporal Brent was what the men were wont to call "a dandy Jack," though there was not a man in the troop-barracks at the western end of the parade who cared more than once to put on the gloves with the "dandy." Brent had speedily demonstrated the fact that he could outspar any man in the cavalry portion of the garrison, and that only Sergeant Connors, of C company, was able to beat him in a bout. In the little battalion of infantry Brent was a popular man; so, too, had he been in the cavalry command that recently occupied the post; but these fellows of the Eleventh, who had but lately marched in, seemed rather slow to discover his many good traits. Very possibly they did not like the apparent ease with which he had defeated the champions they had so confidently sent against him. Still, it was a good-natured, not vindictive, sort of jealousy,—that soldierly rivalry between the two corps that seems irrepressible and that really does no great harm,—and Brent had begun to win friends among the troopers, who liked the frank, laughing way he had, when an order was suddenly issued by the new post commander the enforcement of which stirred up a row.

As the last visitor left the colonel's gate and he closed his door, thereby shutting out the broad gleam that, almost like that of the headlight of a locomotive, had shot athwart the parade, Corporal Brent was pondering over this very matter.

Colonel Morris was a man who hated irregularity of any kind, and as the grass began to sprout in the spring he noted that it failed to grow along what was evidently a short cut between the southwest gate, the way to town, and the infantry barracks at the eastern end. The former post commander, a cavalryman like himself, had not paid much *attention to this* sort of thing, and the infantry had grown to look

upon the short cut as a sort of thoroughfare sacred to their uses: no officer ever had occasion to go that way. When, therefore, the beaten pathway was ploughed up and re-sodded, and an order was issued that the men must confine themselves to the gravel path or the road-way, there were just a few old foot-soldiers who saw fit to grumble, and some of them, returning late at night from a visit on pass to the neighboring town, made sarcastic allusions to the new order as they trudged homeward under the windows of the officers' quarters on the south side. Others still, trusting to darkness and a theory that all officers should be abed at that hour, proceeded to wear a parallel path, and these two transgressions being occasionally repeated, and the officer of the day having twice come upon the transgressors without having captured one of their number,—for the "dough-boys" were fleet of foot,—a second order was issued requiring all enlisted men returning to the post between tattoo and reveille to enter their barracks from the rear and not to cross the quadrangle bounded by the fence. There was a road all around in rear of the barracks and quarters, but in the wet spring weather it was often deep with mud and generally dark as Erebus. What wonder, therefore, that many parties still managed to slip in, not exactly in defiance of the order, but because the enlisted men had a fine appreciation of that principle of international law which provides that a mere paper blockade is not entitled to respect? Then it was that the "old man," as the soldiers called the colonel, ordered out his blockaders. An extra sentinel's post was established, a sentry was ordered stationed at the southwest gate from tattoo until reveille, and, as all the cavalry were barracked on the west side near their stables, and as the infantry were manifestly the offenders (so argued the colonel), the three additional sentries required were ordered taken from among their number. This order made guard-duty a trifle harder and the infantrymen a trifle madder. Out of sheer mischief, some of them took to passing up the road between the guard-house and the trader's, entering the northwest gate and stalking across the parade in stealthy column of files from that direction, facetiously decorating their trail with empty beer-bottles, whiskey-flasks, or sardine-boxes, over which the police sergeant spent some time and blasphemy after reveille next morning. Then the colonel ordered the northwest gate locked at tattoo, and the laughing rascals climbed the fence. He would not order out more sentries, but he gave the officer of the day directions to have a patrol in readiness at the *flag-staff* between eleven and one that night, and

then some fine foot-racing resulted, in which the patrol came out second best. The colonel ordered the five infantrymen who happened to be on pass arrested and brought to trial before a garrison court, and the court promptly acquitted every man: it was established that they had all obediently gone around the garrison; they had even taken the trouble to call the attention of the sentry on No. 4 to that fact; and then it dawned upon the commanding officer that some of those infantry scamps were, as they would have expressed it, "putting up a job" at his expense, and that half a dozen of the fleetest-footed among them were, just for a lark, slipping out of quarters after eleven o'clock and around to the northwest gate, vaulting the fence with the agility of monkeys, and then playing the old game of "Tom, Tom, pull away" with his patrol. They had not had so much fun in a year.

Colonel Morris had sense enough to know that if he lost his temper and got to blustering the men would regard it as a victory. He issued no new orders. Suspicion had fallen on a squad of rollicking young Irishmen in Company F, all of whom were members of the battalion base-ball nine. A match game was to come off two days later with the club from Fort Lawrence, and local interest—and bets—were running high. Alas! when the morning of the eventful day came around, four of the fleetest base-runners in the Rifle Nine languished in the guard-house, arrested at reveille by order of their own captain for absence from quarters at midnight. The colonel had simply let them get out, then ordered check roll-call, with doors barred, and they stood self-exiled. Fancy the consternation among the lovers of the national game! Even the cavalry had backed the local nine against that from Lawrence, and well knew that if substitutes had to be put in there was no earthly chance of their winning. Manifestly, said the battalion, there's no man but Corporal Brent to get us out of the scrape. He was captain and short-stop of the Nine, and on him they rallied forthwith. "Give me your word, men, that there's to be no more of this monkey business, and I'll go to the colonel myself. Refuse, and the game goes to Fort Lawrence, nine to nothing, for we can't play without Lynch and Cooney on the bases." It was a case of unconditional surrender.

The colonel had kindly received the young corporal, had listened to the tale of woe, and sat silently pondering a moment. Then he

ked up. "You say the game must go against you without these r men?" he asked.

"Yes, sir. Indeed, I would not play without them. We would better let the game go by default than have the record published, it assuredly would be, in the army as well as the local papers, with the errors scored against us. This nine of ours has not been beaten any team in the department as yet, and it would be an unearned tory for Fort Lawrence."

Colonel Morris sat keenly studying the young soldier's face. He de no answer for a moment, and when he spoke it was of an utterly elevant matter:

"Have you not served somewhere under my command before this, poral?"

The color sprang to Brent's face. There was an instant of hesita-n, then a firm but respectful answer:

"Nowhere, sir. I have been in the army only two years, and this my first station since leaving the depot at David's Island." Then, though eager to get back to a more pressing matter, "If the colonel l not consider me as proposing a compromise, and will take it as s meant, I can promise, I think, that there will be no more of this ght prowling across the parade, on the part of our men at least."

Morris looked sharply up from under his shaggy brows:

"What do you mean? What men would have any occasion to ss the parade but the infantry?"

"I mean, in all respect, sir, that there may be men or, at least, a n who, having no occasion to cross the parade, will do so simply for e sake of making trouble. In plain words, a cavalryman, sir."

The adjutant, sitting at his desk, dropped his pen and looked ickly up, and the sergeant-major, going out with a bundle of papers, nd means to halt at the office door, as though to hear what might low. Mr. Mason, the adjutant, turned quietly, caught the sergeant-jor's eye, and gave a quick but expressive jerk of the head in the ection of the outer room. The sergeant-major took the hint and nished.

But the clerks had heard the corporal's intimation that some trooper s connected with the transgression for which the ball-playing quar-te were confined. The door was immediately closed, leaving them draw their own inferences and make their own comments. They l not hear the colonel's next remark:

"If any man in the cavalry is guilty in this matter, there is only one whom I can suspect. Can you name him?"

Corporal Brent flushed again, but finally replied, "I beg the colonel not to ask me to answer, when, as I said before, I have no proof whatever."

Colonel Morris turned and pondered a moment. Finally he whirled about in his revolving chair:

"Corporal Brent, if these four men were of my own regiment I would certainly refuse your request. As matters stand, I will not spoil the chances of the Rifle Nine. They will, therefore, be turned over to you to take their part in the game, and to-morrow must stand their trial before the garrison court."

And when Corporal Brent left the office, infinitely rejoiced, the colonel turned to his staff-officer:

"Where do you suppose the recruiting officers picked up a fellow like that? He has the language of an educated man."

"He was enlisted in New York," was the reply, "and I have frequently noted him on guard. They tell me he has more influence over the men in his battalion than any other non-commissioned officer; and I am glad he has promised that there will be no more of this night business."

And yet, two days afterwards, the colonel sent for Corporal Brent to say that the agreement was being violated. Three soldiers had been seen running from the southwest gate across the parade the night before. The sentry had been taken off on the strength of the arrangement; the Rifle Nine had won the game amidst great enthusiasm, and there was a liberal transfer of Treasury notes in consequence. The infantry and many of the cavalrymen were rejoicing in unaccustomed wealth between pay-days, and applications for passes to visit town had been of unusual number. The four culprits had pleaded guilty to their offence and been awarded some light fine. The "dough-boys," fully appreciating the colonel's consideration in the matter, as fully meant to stand by their promise to Brent: it was with not a little feeling, therefore, that they received the news that the compact was violated.

That Saturday evening, in some mysterious way, Corporal Mullen of the guard sprained his wrist just after tattoo; and though Brent was not the next man on the roster, with the adjutant's full consent he appeared armed and equipped at the guard-house and reported for duty as Mullen's successor in charge of the second relief. Examining the list of men absent on pass, he made mental note of two in his own

ıttalion and looked visibly disappointed when he scanned the cavalry ames. It had been ordered that all men returning from pass should eport at the guard-house, leave their papers with the officer of the uard, and then return to their quarters, those of the infantry battalion assing around outside the officers' houses, those of the cavalry enter- ng their barracks by the rear steps at once.

Three days of sunshine and breeze had dried the ground so that he paths around the post were in perfect order, and, except that it made heir walk longer by some two hundred paces, there was no discomfort n obeying the order. The first batch of returning soldiers appeared ıbout half-past eleven, surrendered their passes, and went quietly away o their barracks. Another squad appeared about ten minutes later; ɔut there was still no sign of the two whose names Brent had noted ınd whose pass expired at midnight. It was then that the young soldier, with the permission of the officer of the guard, strode quickly ɔver to the southwest gate, a hundred yards away.

From here he noted the dispersal of the little party that had been spending the evening at the colonel's; here he had straightened up and, standing under the lamp-post, tendered his soldierly salute to Captain ınd Mrs. Lane as they passed in front of him, repeating it an instant ıfter when a young lady, with dark, sparkling eyes, looked him quickly over as she tripped by on the arm of her escort; and while the latter held open the gate of the brick quarters at the corner, almost within earshot, she inquired,—

"Who is that infantry corporal, Mr. Hearn?"

"That? Oh, you didn't get here in time for the ball-game, Miss Marshall, or you wouldn't have asked. That's Corporal Brent, captain of the Rifle Nine."

"Can't we persuade you to come in a few minutes, Mr. Hearn?" called Mrs. Lane, in her sweet, cordial voice.

"Yes, do come, Hearn," chimed in the captain, ever ready to second his wife's motion.

The lieutenant hesitated an instant and glanced at the girl who had just stepped within the gate; but, as she said nothing that seemed in any way pressing, he raised his forage-cap, and, pleasantly declining, bade them good-night and went briskly away. Opening her window five minutes later to close the outer blinds, Miss Marshall glanced down from above the piazza roof and saw the corporal of the guard still standing there under the lamp, apparently waiting. He looked quickly

up at sound of the creaking shutter, then turned aside. The next moment, before she could fasten the blind, the sentry at the guard-house sung out, "Number One, twelve o'clock." The corporal leaned his rifle against the fence, quickly extinguished the lamp, and all in front of the quarters was darkness.

Down at the guard-house she could see the bleary light of the oil lamp and the dim form of the sentry pacing to and fro; she stood there by the window straining her ears for the watch-call of the distant sentries far over by the haystacks and wood-yard, then nodded her head approvingly at the soldierly ring in the voice of No. 1, as he sung out the final "All's well." Peering through the shutters, she was wondering what had become of the corporal, when the latch of their gate clicked; the rusty hinges gave a sudden squeak; there was a rattle as of a falling rifle, a muttered ejaculation; she could just dimly make out a shadowy form stooping to pick up the gun, and then cautiously reclosing the gate. Then, instead of moving away, there it stood, leaning against the fence. Evidently Corporal Brent had business there and had come to stay. Instantly she bethought her of the talk she had heard among the officers about the colonel's order prohibiting the men from crossing the parade, of the implied promise that no more violations should occur in recognition of the colonel's having released the quartette of roysterers in time for the great match game, and of the alleged violation of this contract. She was a young woman of quick perception: Brent had evidently posted himself there to capture the malefactors should they appear.

Quarter of an hour passed without the faintest sound from without. She heard Captain Lane extinguishing the lamps in the parlor below, and Mrs. Lane had come tripping up to her door to say good-night, but, seeing that her guest was writing, refrained from coming farther, though Miss Marshall promptly laid aside her pen and diary and cordially bade her enter. All was quiet within and without, and she was just about pulling down the shade, when, peeping through the blinds, she saw the dark shadowy form at the fence move quickly, stealthily into the road. The next moment there came stern, low-toned challenge:

"Halt, you men!"

There was instant scurry and rush; a muttered oath; two shadowy forms darted out by the gate, and, at top speed, their flying footsteps

could be dimly heard rushing tiptoe around to the back of the garrison. But there was no pursuit. One man evidently had stood his ground.

"Where are you going?" was Brent's question, in the same low, stern tone.

"To my quarters," was the answer, in accents that were plainly defiant. "Who are you? and what business is it of yours?"

"I am the corporal of the guard, and you are disobeying orders in entering the garrison. Face about and go with me to the guard-house."

"You can't arrest me, by God! I'm going right to my quarters. I'm not going to cross the parade."

"That will do. Face about!" Brent's voice was heard. "You know perfectly well that you disobeyed orders in entering that gate. What's your name?—and your troop?"

"None of your damned business. I'm 'tending to my affairs; you 'tend to yours."

"I am; and I arrest you, whoever you are. Not another word, now, unless you want me to use force."

"Don't you dare lay a hand on me, damn you! I don't recognize your authority. You're not corporal of the guard; I saw who marched on guard this morning, and you were not one of them. Get out of my way, or I'll——" Then came sudden scuffle; an oath; a gasping cry. One man could be heard running with lightning speed to the gloomy outlines of the cavalry barracks, close at hand; another seemed to dash in pursuit. Then came the sound of a stunning blow, the crash of a rifle upon the gravelly road, a heavy fall, a moan. Then—silence.

II.

There was a frown on Colonel Morris's face on Sunday morning that boded ill for officer or man who could not come up to the standard of the post commander on the forthcoming inspection. The old order of things was still in existence, and a beneficent administration had not yet issued its ban against martial exercises of any kind upon the Lord's day. First call for inspection in full dress had "gone," as the soldiers say, as the colonel appeared in the panoply of his profession upon the front piazza, glancing modified approval at the glistening surface of his top-boots and the brilliant polish of his spurs. Down at the front gate

his orderly stood, every item of his dress and equipment a model of soldierly trimness. Out in the centre of the parade a little party of the guard had just lowered the storm-flag that had been hoisted at dawn, and were running up in its stead the great garrison standard, whose folds of scarlet and white lapped out lazily in response to the soft breeze now rising from the westward bluffs. Over at the barracks the men had come pouring forth, the neat dark blue and white of the infantry at the east side contrasting favorably with the glaring yellow trimmings of the cavalry battalion, swarming along the walk and streaming from the stairways and galleries of their crowded quarters, like so many full-plumaged hornets. On the verandas across the parade, helmeted officers and ladies in dainty muslins began to appear, and along the row to his right and left the sheltered porches were similarly occupied. But the post commander stood alone. Madame his better half had visitors. Breakfast was not quite finished, and she was devoting herself to their entertainment, knowing well that her liege lord was feeling in no mood for such light duty.

Almost the first thing that the colonel heard on going down-stairs this bright Sunday morning was an animated colloquy in the kitchen between cook and his man-of-all-work, an old darky who had followed the family fortunes for years. Jake had learned from the police-sergeant, while he was at work on the colonel's boots and spurs, that Corporal Brent had been "slugged" by somebody the night before and was now lying unconscious in the hospital. There was time only for very brief investigation before his guests came down. Mr. Wallace was officer of the guard, and, in response to the message brought by the colonel's orderly, had gone at once to his quarters and made his report.

Somewhere about twenty minutes after midnight, the sentry on No. 1 had called Corporal Werner out, saying there appeared to be something wrong up by the gate. Mr. Wallace, knowing Brent to have gone thither, sprang up and went outside, and saw a light being carried rapidly from Captain Lane's quarters, at the corner, over towards the cavalry barracks. Hurrying around in front, he got there just in time to see the captain and the young lady who had recently arrived, Miss Marshall, raising Corporal Brent from the ground. He was bleeding from a jagged gash over the left eye, and was limp and senseless. After having him carried to the hospital and arousing the steward, it was found that his face and eyes were covered with red pepper. Not a word as to his assailants could be learned. The last men to reach

he garrison were Murphy and Scanlan, two scapegraces of Company
. But the sentry on No. 4 declared they had come around by his
ost on the south side, whereas Brent was lying almost in front of the
uarters of C troop, inside the post. Then, again, Scanlan and Murphy
ere both sober, and neither of them men who would be likely to
ssault so popular and respected a fellow as Brent. Indeed, both of
hem stoutly denied having had anything to do with the case. What
as more, Miss Marshall had said that she heard the altercation, heard
scuffle, and heard, though she could not see, that the man ran toward
he cavalry barracks with the corporal in pursuit; then came the sound
f a shock or blow; then the fall, and, hurrying down-stairs, she had
alled Captain Lane, and, lighting his little hurricane lamp, she had
astened out along the road, the captain rapidly following; and there
t the foot of C troop stairway lay Brent, bleeding profusely.

"It was some of our men that did it, sir," said Wallace, regret-
ully, "and I'd give a month's pay to prove it on them. I'd give
ore than that if I thought I could prove that no cavalryman had
nything to do with it.

Then the colonel had sent his orderly to ask the doctor how Brent
as coming on, and the doctor replied that he was still unconscious
nd he really could not tell how the case would end. It was from this
essage the orderly had just returned. Old Morris was greatly dis-
urbed. He had purposed having a review of the entire command,
avalry dismounted, and treating his guests to a stirring and martial
ight; but when the assembly sounded he had completely changed his
ind, and so informed his wife. "I'm all upset about this affair," he
aid, "and impatient to begin an investigation."

The band was ordered back to quarters; the captains were notified
o inspect their companies on their own parades; and, merely ex-
hanging his helmet for forage-cap and laying aside his sabre, the
olonel strode over to the office, passing by the three cavalry troops
hat were nearest him, even cutting across the parade as though to
void salute, and appeared directly in front of C troop, that was drawn
p, in double rank and at open order, farthest to the south side.
ieutenant Hearn, temporarily in command, was engaged in inspecting
arbines, but at sight of the regimental commander discontinued his
ork and raised his hand to the visor of his helmet.

"Go on, go on, Mr. Hearn," said the colonel, gruffly. "I did not
ean to interrupt you." Nevertheless, he who had paid no attention

to the other companies plainly halted in front of C, and was scanning the men's faces with eyes that were full of gloom. Next he strode around the right of the line, and passed down in front of the rear rank until he reached the centre, where the tallest men were standing, and where he fixed his gaze upon one soldier, a tall, slender, but muscular fellow; he looked him from head to foot, but passed him slowly without one word. A sergeant file-closer noted that the fingers of the soldier's left hand twitched and closed as the colonel approached, and that a lump seemed to rise in the brawny throat, but was quickly gulped down. There was no other symptom, though, and Lieutenant Mason, the adjutant, who had joined his colonel, saw that the man's eyes never wavered from their look straight to the front, although he might have paled a trifle under that stern, searching gaze.

Half an hour later, inspection being over, the colonel sat in his office, holding an investigation. The captain of C troop was absent on sick-leave at the time, and the command had devolved upon a young officer who had won a fine record in their Arizona days, and who was regarded throughout the regiment as perhaps the most promising of all the subalterns. He was an excellent horseman, a fine tactician, and a drill-master of whom his men had become vastly proud. Under the mild-mannered sway of their captain, a war veteran of uncertain years, C had fallen about to the foot in proficiency in drill and horsemanship. But the moment young Hearn got command they began the turning over of a very new leaf. Little instruction of any kind except mountain-scouting had been imparted in Arizona, but when they came eastward, and old Riggs, their former colonel, made way for a much better soldier, discipline and drill began on the instant. For a few weeks C troop had to take all the raspings, and the men were disheartened as much by the jeers of their comrades as by the sharp raps of their colonel. Hearn, too, was fretting himself half to death; but when his captain was taken ill and was compelled to turn over the troop to his subaltern, the youngster "took hold" in a way that filled Mason's soul with delight, and that speedily enchanted the men. From being the worst, C troop soon challenged all comers for the right to be called the best-drilled troop at the post, and Captain Lane, of D, had cordially congratulated Hearn on the result of his excellent effort. The young fellow had that faculty, in which so many are lacking, of inspiring the men with enthusiasm and interest; and by the time April was ushered in there was nothing the troopers of C would not do for their young commander.

Black sheep, they say, exist in every flock, and while fifty or more of their men swore by their lieutenant, and were proud to serve under him, there were perhaps two soldiers in the troop who seemed to lose no opportunity of defaming him. One of these was a man named Goss, who had long been on extra or daily duty as clerk for the quartermaster, and whose errors at inspection were of such an exasperating character that Mr. Hearn got authority to make him attend drill until he was reported proficient. This, of course, made Goss, who prided himself on his scholarship and superiority to the general run of the men, anything but happy; and in his wrath and discontent he vented his spleen whenever possible to do so at the expense of his young lieutenant. The other man was a tall, dark-eyed, gypsy-looking fellow, whose name was Welsh, and who for several months, off and on, had preferred to be the captain's "striker," or soldier servant,—take care of his horses, black his boots, polish his spurs and sabre, hew wood, draw water, make the fires, sweep the kitchen, run errands, and do all manner of small chores about the house,—than to do soldier duty with his comrades. When the captain closed up his quarters and left the post, taking his family eastward with him, Lieutenant Hearn moved in to look after them for him. This was by the captain's own request; and, having no use for the services of Welsh, he notified that worthy to return to duty with the troop forthwith. This Welsh bitterly resented. He insisted that the captain had told him before going that he was to stay in charge of his quarters and be excused from all military duty. Hearn replied that there was probably some mistake, but telegraphed to the captain and obtained immediate reply to the effect that he had never given the soldier any such promise, and that he desired that he be now returned to duty with the troop and taught something of the practical duties of a soldier, which he had too long neglected.

Hearn smiled to himself as he read this, thinking whose fault it was that Welsh had been allowed to live in ignorance of much of the drill, and wondering not a little at the change of heart that seemed to have come over the captain, now that he was fairly away. A smart young corporal was detailed to give the two men thorough instruction in the sabre-exercise and the manual of the carbine and pistol, in addition to which Welsh was now required to attend all roll-calls, stable-duty, and drills with the troop, and take his guard tour every fifth day, and a disgusted man he was in consequence.

As the captain's "striker" he had led a life of comparative ease, for

that veteran officer had long since outlived any ambition to shine in the service, and looked upon it only as a means of livelihood. At the outbreak of the war old Blauvelt was keeping a country store in Ohio, but dropped his yard-stick and sugar-scoop at the first call for volunteers, fought like a man all through the four years' contest, was wounded, and, having risen to be a major of volunteer infantry, he decided in '66 to stick to soldiering, for at that time it was easy to obtain a commission in the regular service if a man had any Congressional influence or connections at all. When the army was remodelled by the drastic process in 1871, and, as a first lieutenant, he was dropped to the supernumerary list from the regiment of infantry with which he had been serving, Blauvelt decided that he was now too old to begin storekeeping over again, and so he made vigorous effort to be retained in the army, and, together with a few other men who did not know a horse from a hand-saw, was transferred to a vacancy in the cavalry, and there the placid old fellow had been ever since.

Rejoining from the East with a batch of recruits, immediately after the arrival of the regiment from Arizona, Blauvelt had resumed command of C troop, and had given directions that the tall, gypsy-looking fellow, Welsh, who was one of the new-comers, should be put in charge of his horses. Next he moved those veteran quadrupeds from the troop-stables to a little barn in the back yard of his own quarters. Then Welsh himself moved his "kit" from barracks to a little room in the barn, and gradually became an inmate of the captain's household, taking his meals under the captain's roof, performing no duty with the troop, exempted from the authority of the first sergeant, yet spending all his leisure moments in loafing among the company quarters, where he speedily gained the reputation of being surly and insolent to the non-commissioned officers and a mischief-maker among the men. For a recruit who had only recently enlisted, it was surprising how much he knew about the ins and outs of soldier life. Sergeant Wren openly accused him of having been in service somewhere before, and, as he had no papers to show, he must be either a deserter or a "bobtail."* Welsh angrily denied this, and his ignorance of sabre-drill and certain trooper details seemed to bear him out. "But then," said Wren, "he might have been in the 'dough-boys.'" Welsh avoided the troop quarters for a while after this episode, and was more civil to the ser-

* A soldier whose discharge-paper has had the "Character" cut off.

geants, but right after pay-day he again appeared, eager to try his luck in any game going on. Then it transpired that, if not an expert with saddle and sabre, he was with the cards, and the troopers lost their money to him without exactly understanding how. The first sergeant reported these occurrences to Captain Blauvelt, and the old man seemed greatly vexed. It was established that Welsh had been neglecting the horses while playing his game, but he was not relieved and ordered back to duty with the troop, as had been expected. If anything, he became more insolent in manner to the sergeants than before. The whole affair seemed unaccountable to the other men.

One morning about a month after Welsh's arrival at the post, Lieutenant Hearn came leaping lightly up the steps to make an inspection of the barracks. Corporal Quinn, seeing him approach the quarters, had given word to the men, and those of them who were in shirt-sleeves jumped into their flannel blouses, while others knocked the ashes out of their pipes and put them away. Three or four were seated around a little table playing cards, and among these was the gypsy fellow Welsh, who had been there ever since guard-mount. These men, too, sprang to their bunks and straightened up some items of their "kits," but Welsh still sat at the table, grumbling at the interruption to the game. "Put up those cards, Welsh," said a sergeant, bluntly. "Here comes the lieutenant."

"What do I care?" was the surly answer. "I'm not under his orders. He's got no authority over me."

"Do as I tell you, and be quick about it," was the reply.

"Do it yourself; they ain't my cards. I didn't put them there," answered the man, with an ugly gleam in his black eyes, while he drew from one pocket a piece of chamois-skin and from the other one of the captain's big brass spurs. There was no time for further remark.

"Attention!" came the order from the sergeant who happened to be nearest the door, and the lieutenant entered. Every man on the instant whipped off his cap, and, facing the middle of the long room, stood erect at the foot of his bunk,—every man except one. With his cap on the back of his head, his matted hair hanging down over his eyes, Welsh sat there at the table, coolly polishing the spur.

"Get up there, Welsh!" growled in low, stern tones the first sergeant. "Off with that cap, sir."

For all answer, Welsh cocked his head on one side, and, apparently unmindful of the presence of an officer, became critically and approv-

ingly absorbed in studying the polish which he was imparting to the smooth surface of the spur.

"Did you hear that order? Come to attention, sir!" repeated the sergeant. And the men, astonished at the breach of discipline, looked curiously at the recruit, now slowly and scowlingly finding his feet. He had not removed his cap when the lieutenant stood before him.

"Why did you not rise with the other men, Welsh?" asked Mr. Hearn, in a quiet and deliberate tone oddly at variance with his usually quick and snappy manner, and the young officer looked straight into the soldier's eyes as he spoke.

"Didn't suppose I had to," was the sullen reply.

"Why not?"

"Well, Tactics say soldiers actually at work don't have to rise and salute officers."

"And what work were you doing?"

"Work for the captain,—cleaning his spurs."

There was a strange silence in the room. This was a new interpretation, and for a recruit decidedly an original one.

"Where did you learn that idea, Welsh?" asked the lieutenant, still calmly, though his blue eyes began to dilate in a way that indicated how thoroughly he appreciated the man's defiant manner.

"Well, no matter; I learned it."

"You have had a very bad teacher, sir. Take your hand out of that pocket!"

An ugly scowl had settled on Welsh's downcast face. He had stuffed the chamois-skin in his blouse pocket, and still stood there in a slouching attitude, with his cap on the back of his head. Slowly, in obedience to the order, he lowered his hand to the side.

"Now take your cap off!"

One could have heard a pin drop all over the big room.

Forty men stood there in silence, listening breathlessly to this strange and unusual colloquy. Reluctantly, yet overawed by the steady gaze in the blue eyes of the young officer, Welsh's hand went up to the cap, then tossed it angrily some distance away. If he expected rebuke on that score it was not forthcoming.

"Now get your heels together and stand attention."

"You've got no right to order me around like this, Lieutenant Hearn. I'm on duty for the captain, I am,—not for any second lieutenant."

For an instant every nerve and muscle in the officer's athletic frame ɛemed to quiver. His blue eyes blazed with wrath, and his lips set rmly under the blonde moustache.

There was a moment of death-like silence; a gasp or two among ıe men. Sergeant Wren's bronzed, weather-beaten face was a picture f amaze and indignation. Welsh himself, as though realizing the ısolence of his language and dreading the consequences, had finally ssumed the position of a soldier,—so far at least as his heels and legs ere concerned; but his head hung forward and his eyes glanced fur- vely about the room as if in search of sympathy; but there was not soldier to side with him.

"Take that man under guard," were at last the words that fell rom the lieutenant's lips.

A corporal stepped quickly forward. "Come on, Welsh," he mut- ɛred, in no gentle tone, and led the scowling trooper from the room.

The lieutenant calmly finished his inspection of the quarters, a red pot burning in each cheek, as he walked around from bunk to bunk. Then, as he turned away and lightly descended the stairs, Sergeant Ross's voice was heard to say, "Rest!" The men looked quickly bout at one another. Some of them stretched their arms to full ength and gave a long sigh, as though to find relief from the strain. And then little Duffy announced his opinion:

"By gad, fellers, if I'd been the lieutenant, I'd have knocked the op of his d——d head off."

The garrison court which tried Trooper Welsh for insubordinate ɔnduct had found him guilty, despite his statement that according to he Tactics he wasn't required to get up and salute, he being at work. The evidence of the sergeants established the fact that he was playing ards when the lieutenant approached, and that the spur-cleaning was ı transparent sham, introduced for the occasion and for evident pur- ɔose. But in view of the fact that he claimed to believe that, as the ɛaptain's orderly, he was not under the lieutenant's orders, in view of he fact that he had apparently been only ten months in service, and ɔf the further fact that his captain gave him an excellent character and ɔleaded for clemency for the recruit, the court saw fit to let him off ɛasily with a fine. Mr. Mason, the adjutant, and Mr. Hearn were ɪtrongly of the opinion that he ought to be returned to the troop at ɔnce and taught his duties as a soldier. But the colonel was away just hen; Major Kenyon, of the infantry, was temporarily in command,

and he would not disturb old Blauvelt's "striker." Indeed, it seemed as though the troop commander was disposed to resent Hearn's having ordered the man to be confined, though the young officer was actually in command that day, the captain being on sick-report. It is certain, too, that Mrs. Blauvelt made some very acrimonious criticisms of the lieutenant's action, and that the first story in circulation in the garrison was by no means creditable to either his tact or temper. Welsh spent only two days in the guard-house this time, but his language during that brief incarceration was such as to intensify the feeling among the men that he was no novice in garrison affairs. He was loud in his threats against the lieutenant, and full of argument as to the propriety of his conduct.

"I *was* at work, by God! and had 'particular occupation,' to use the language of the Tactics, and you'll find it in paragraph 797, and I wasn't required to rise and uncover. Look at it and you will see for yourselves," he complained.

And it was Sergeant McKenna, of the infantry, who retorted,—

"And where did you—a cavalryman—learn the numbers of the paragraphs in infantry tactics, Welsh? And while you were about it, why didn't you learn paragraph 803 as well? that's the one that covers your case, me buck, and, begad! if I'd been there you'd 'a' dropped that spur-r and got on your feet d——d quick, or I'd 'a' jerked the backbone out of yees. Where did you learn your infantry tactics, I say?"

And here Welsh could only redden with mingled wrath and confusion. From this time on the impression gained ground that he was a deserter from some foot regiment, and one who had again enlisted in the army, but under an assumed name.

Within the week after Captain Blauvelt's departure Trooper Welsh was twice again confined and brought before a garrison court. He had accompanied the captain's family to the train, and, carrying Mrs. Blauvelt's numerous bags and baskets into the sleeper, was borne away, apparently unavoidably. The conductor wired back that he had safely landed him at Barclay, a thriving little town ten miles to the east, and that he had abundant means to buy his ticket back; but he was gone forty-eight hours, and at the expiration of that time was dumped in a dishevelled condition at the post by the town marshal, with the information that if it had not been for the crossed sabres on his cap he would have had him in the county jail for drunken and disorderly conduct

nd resistance to the officers of the law. "Where does he get his noney?" asked that official. "He smashed about twenty dollars' vorth of glass windows, and paid all fines, costs, and damages, and 'et had some ten dollars to spare." The men in C troop could have old where he got his money, but, as that was won in gambling, nothing vas said, by them, about it. Welsh was tried for absence without leave, nd coolly pleaded that he had been carried away while serving his cap- ain and was then detained by the civil authorities. Lieutenant Hearn, nowever, testified that he, who carried one of the children aboard, had mple time to get off, and that Welsh preceded him in getting on the rain. The town marshal testified that Welsh was drunk around the illage for thirty-six hours, but that nobody interfered with him until is conduct became so outrageous that he was compelled to arrest him. Welsh, therefore, was sentenced to a fine of five dollars and to ten days n the guard-house, simply for absence without leave, attending all rills and stable-duty. Three days later, while he was grooming one f Captain Blauvelt's horses at the picket-line, Lieutenant Hearn's pirited little bay, which happened to be next him playing with the rumpeter's steed across the line, suddenly switched around with his owerful haunches and knocked Welsh's curry-comb out of his hand. The gypsy fellow straightened up, glanced quickly about him, saw that he lieutenant's back was turned, and then, with a vicious gleam in his iercing eyes, drew back his heavily-booted right foot and with all his orce kicked the young bay in the stomach. Keogh plunged madly vith the sudden pain, and in an instant little Dooley, who was groom- ng the lieutenant's horse, had thrown down curry-comb and brush and mote the gypsy under the eye, knocking him up against the captain's ulky and placid charger. In another instant, too, Sergeant Wren eaped in and separated the men, Welsh wild with fury, Dooley dancing bout in a glow of righteous wrath.

Hearing the noise, the lieutenant sprang to the scene. "Silence, oth of you!" he ordered. "What does this mean, sergeant?"

"He struck me, the infernal little cur, and I'll kill——"

"Not a word more from you, Welsh. What made you strike him, Dooley?"

"Look at Keogh's belly, sir," almost sobbed the little Irishman in is rage and grief. "See where he kicked him."

Sure enough, there on the glistening coat an ugly lump was rising nd a jagged groove plainly showed where the cruel boot had struck,

while Keogh still quivered and trembled. For a moment young Hearn was too angry to trust himself to speak. He stood there with his eyes fairly blazing. At last he turned to the sergeant:

"This man has been frequently cautioned never to strike or kick a horse, I suppose?"

"Every man in the troop has, sir, time and again."

Hearn slowly turned upon the scowling soldier: "It would serve you but right if I kicked you as you have kicked that horse. Brutality of that kind cannot be tolerated here, sir, and you will stand your trial for it. Take him back to the guard-house, sergeant."

"I kicked him because he kicked me," growled Welsh.

"It's a lie, sir," cried Dooley, bursting in. "Sure the horse was just playing, like, and never touched him at all."

"Never mind, Dooley: your evidence will be called for when it is wanted."

"By God! if I'm to be punished for hitting a horse, what's to be done with him for striking a man, I want to know?" exclaimed Welsh, as with a curse he hurled his curry-comb to the ground.

"Come on, you blackguard," muttered Sergeant Wren, as he collared the man. "You can thank God I didn't see you do it. I'd l'arn you never to kick a horse."

It was this affair which led to Welsh's third court-martial in less than a month. And it was Welsh now whom Colonel Morris believed to have been the assailant of Corporal Brent the night before, and the instigator, as well, of more or less of the mischief that had been going on. It was Welsh whom Mr. Hearn more than half suspected. It was Welsh whom Sergeant Wren himself had openly accused when the troop came back from stables Sunday morning. But when Wren was called into the colonel's presence at the office, and asked what he knew, he was compelled to say it could not have been Welsh at all.

"What are your reasons, sergeant?" asked the colonel. And the eyes of the group of officers were fixed on the veteran trooper who stood so sturdily and respectfully before them.

"Because I went through the quarters just after tattoo last night to see how the men had been cleaning up for to-day. Their boots had all been carefully blacked, except the stable-boots, and set at the foot of the bunks, and their blouses and trousers, except the ones they had on, were brushed and folded on their boxes. I took particular note of Welsh's, for he was stubborn about cleaning his things; and about Goss's, too,

r Goss has been surly ever since he was made to drill and attend in-
ection. Sergeant Ross says no man passed through the door before
: went to sleep; but any man who wanted to could slip out of a win-
›w in his stocking-feet and go down the rear stairway, and then run
›wn to Mulligan's place just outside the reservation and get what liquor
: wanted, and come back the same way. I was one of the first, sir,
get dressed to go out after Corporal Brent was hurt. The other cor-
›ral of the guard came into my room to get my lantern, and just as
›on as they had carried Brent to the hospital I ran up-stairs and made
ı inspection. Welsh was there in his bunk, undressed, and apparently
ıleep. His boots and clothes hadn't been touched. Goss was in his
nderclothing, half awake. There were his boots covered with dust,
nd in places still damp with dew. There were the trousers that had
een folded, lying loosely across the box. Goss swore that he hadn't
een out at all, but I pointed to his boots and trousers, and when the
ıan started up, as though in surprise, to look at them, a pint-flask half
lled with whiskey slid from under his pillow." But this was not
ll, said Wren. Scanlan and Murphy had admitted being joined by a
rooper as they came up past the stables. He joined them again after
hey had reported at the guard-house, a trifle late, had given them a
rink of whiskey from his flask, told them the coast was clear and they
ıight just as well slip through the gate and run across the parade:
/hat was the odds, so long as no one knew it? But the instant they
ıeard Corporal Brent's voice, they started and ran until behind the
fficers' quarters, and then they noted that their cavalry acquaintance
ıad stayed behind. They did not know his name at all,—could not
escribe him, for it was too dark: all they knew was that he was tall
nd had a thick, bushy beard. Welsh's face, except the black mous-
ıche, was always clean shaved: not so, however, with Goss. He wore
full beard.

At noon on Sunday, therefore, Trooper Goss was behind the bars, waiting the result of Corporal Brent's injuries. When searched at the uard-house, and his pockets were turned inside out, the corporal of the uard began to sneeze; and then it was discovered that some tiny, ıwny-colored particles sticking about the seam were grains of Cayenne epper, a small packet of which, half empty, was found lying in the ›ad-way, midway between the quarters and the southwest gate.

III.

It was a lovely May morning, and a warm south wind was blowing through the open windows of Captain Lane's cosey quarters and billowing the dainty curtains of the breakfast-room. Down in the westward valley, close under the bluffs, a white mist was creeping upward from the shallows of the stream, and here and there among the furrows of the company gardens, and along the railway-embankment, little wisps of fog hovered over the soaking earth. It had rained in torrents during the night, but Nature emerged from her bath glowing in the rays of a sunrise that the officer of the day pronounced simply gorgeous, as he turned out for reveille. A man less joyous-hearted than Captain Lane might have found much to delight him in such a radiant morning. But those sunrises were old stories to this particular trooper, and though there was hardly a State or Territory west of the Missouri in which he had not turned out with the lark and welcomed in the new-born day, he seemed just as keen a worshipper of the sun-god as in the buoyancy of his boyish days, when, nearly a score of years before, he had first joined the Eleventh Cavalry. He was a man honored and esteemed in his profession. He was well-to-do in the world, thanks to the prudence and frugality of his subaltern days. He had hardly a care in the world. He had charming quarters, had a charming station, and he was wedded only during the year before to a woman whom he devotedly loved, and who believed that the world had never contained a man so true and tender and noble as he. A very lovely woman was Mrs. Lane, and a very sweet and winning hostess she made when doing the honors of her army home. There were those, to be sure, who could detect a species of nervousness and a vague anxiety in her manner at times, and there were people—there always are, worse luck!—who could not quite forgive her her present happiness, or excuse it in her that, after having been wooed and won by, and wedded to, the Adonis of the regiment some few years before, she had again wedded, and this time the most eligible bachelor in the command, not much more than two years after the not untimely taking off of her first husband. "No woman ought to be allowed more than one choice out of a regiment," was the half-laughing, half-rueful remark of some of the army wives who had sisters yet unchosen. They thought Mrs. Lane had rather *too much good luck*, despite the fact, now well and generally known,

hat her first marriage was a brief story of sudden disenchantment, of woe and wretchedness, of shame and sorrow unspeakable. Except among the women, the name of her first husband was rarely spoken in the Eleventh; but, unworthy though he was, there were not lacking censors of her own sex to point out time and again how impossible it would have been for them, had they lost a husband in the army, ever to think of taking another in the same regiment, especially when it was known that No. 2 had been in love with her before she met the original conqueror of her maiden heart. That these remarks should in various forms come eventually to her ears one can hardly doubt; and that a cloud should at times overspread the tranquil sky of her sweet home life, no one who knew Mabel Vincent in her school-days could fail to understand. No one at the post, except her own loyal husband, dreamed of the tears she shed over remarks that, wilfully or witlessly, were repeated to her. He strove earnestly to soothe and comfort her. He redoubled his devoted and thoughtful attentions. Women at the fort simply raved over the lover-like ways of Captain Lane to his own wife, and never tired of pointing out to their respective lords and masters how tender and watchful he was. What charming little presents he was always bringing her! "Where did he get such exquisite violets, —such lovely carnations?" "Did you ever see anything sweeter than that locket he gave her last week? It was an anniversary of some kind. She blushed when I asked her, but wouldn't tell what. He's always finding excuses for giving her something," etc. And finally some of his brother Benedicks had come to him with gloomy faces to say that if he didn't "let up on this sort of thing" they would have to quit the regiment and the service: life was getting to be all one invidious comparison between his loveliness as a husband and their own individual shortcomings in that capacity.

Several months had been spent abroad by Captain and Mrs. Lane after the quiet wedding which united them, and then, joining the regiment at the fort on its return from the Arizona tour, they speedily settled in their army home. For a while the delights of fitting up the quarters with all the beautiful rugs, curtains, pictures, books, and bric-à-brac they had brought from the East kept Mrs. Lane so busily occupied that she had no time to think of possible criticisms. But it was not long before the captain saw that the cloud he dreaded was settling on her sweet and winsome face. He did not need to ask what had been said to her: he could conjecture what that was full well.

Taking her to his strong heart, he had kissed away the brimming tears, saying, "Something has been said to worry and annoy you, dear one. I do not ask you to tell me; but remember what I have always said: in nine cases out of ten, remarks about people sound very differently when repeated by women—and by a good many men, too—than when originally spoken."

Long years of garrison life had taught him that in the almost endless little tiffs and jealousies among the women, and the occasional misunderstandings among the men, people rushed to confide their side of the story and pour forth their grievances into the ears of next-door neighbors, with whom, as likely as not, they became in turn embroiled within the year, while the quarrel with the original object of their wrath had been long since forgotten. His own policy had been to give every man his ear, but none his voice, when personal matters were under discussion. But he knew well that it would be expecting too much of most women that they should simply listen and not tell. There were admirable and truthful wives and mothers in the little coterie, whose friendship he could have coveted for his wife; but one of the odd features of frontier life is that the impulsive rush for the intimate friendship of the newly-arrived army bride is generally made by those who are most apt to betray her confidence when won, and to give her unfavorable impressions, "absolutely without having said one word against them," of the very ones whose stability of character makes them most desirable as friends and neighbors. Lane noted that the women he most liked and respected were the ones whom she was making visible efforts to regard as he did. Perhaps had he painted them in less glowing colors before she had seen for herself, a very different result might have been reached; for if a man really wants his wife to like another woman whom she has not yet met, the less he says of her perfections the better. Wisely Lane made no attempt to control her opinions, but, as his duties kept him away from the house much of the day, and as there was every prospect of the entire battalion being sent on a long practice-march during the summer, he was a trifle at a loss what companionship to provide for her during the inevitable separation. It was with genuine rejoicing, therefore, that he read one day soon after their arrival a letter from her brother which she silently handed him, and then sat watching his face as he conned its three pages.

The captain finally laid it down and looked across the table, a kind

ght in his gray eyes. "You want to do something for her, don't ou, Mabel?" he smilingly asked.

"Indeed, Fred, I wish I could. She has had such hard fortune, id she is such a true girl. It is cruel to think of her now without a ome, and, as Regy says, without a chance of employment. I know ie Woodrows would have been so glad to take her abroad with them companion, but it's too late for that."

"Regy doesn't say why she left Mrs. Withers, but I fancy I can njecture," said Lane. "It was there I first met her, at a dinner-arty one evening,—when I wanted to be with you."

"And yet were abundantly consoled, as I have heard you say more ian once, sir. Oh, she has told me all about it, too. Indeed, if I 'eren't disposed to be mortally jealous of her wit and wisdom, do you now what I'd do?"

"How can I divine, your ladyship?" asks Lane, his eyes twinkling.

"I'd write and bid her come here to us, and I'd marry her to the icest fellow in the Eleventh forthwith. Oh, you shouldn't see anything of her, sir. I'd take good care of that. But," with sudden hange of tone and manner, "wouldn't it be lovely, Fred?"

"Wouldn't what be lovely?" this profound dissembler asks, though ie knows exactly what she is thinking.

"Why, to have her come and live with us and marry in the egiment."

"She isn't very pretty," said the captain, doubtfully, but with the act of a Talleyrand. "The boys might not admire her when Mrs. Lane was alongside."

"Now, Fred!" exclaims Mistress Mabel, provoked and pleased at nce. "You know her eyes are glorious."

"Hum! Passably—when animated."

"When *isn't* she animated? She always enters into everything so heartily. She's so full of fun and life. Why, she would make the ideal army wife, Fred. That girl can do anything."

"Then why condemn her to marrying in the army, Mabel?"

But this question Madame declines to answer. She comes quickly around the table, and, with her arms about his neck, nestles her soft cheek against his bronzed and weather-beaten jowl, burrows under the heavy moustache with her rosy lips, and kisses him lovingly.

"Say I may, Fred," she whispers, coaxingly.

"You may, a dozen times over. I think I rather like it," he laughs, his eyes beaming with delight.

"You stupid boy!" She is shaking him now. "Say I may write and tell her to come right away. Reginald can bring her as far as Kansas City as well as not."

"She'll spoil our *tête-à-têtes*."

"She won't. She'll be having her own before she is here a week. Besides, you're getting tired of them already." She says this, of course, to be contradicted, and is promptly gratified.

The trumpet is sounding "first call," and the captain is compelled to go. "Do as you like, my darling," he gladly answers. "Any friend of yours is welcome; and—I think you might tell her that passes from St. Louis will be forthcoming."

And now, barely two weeks later, Georgia Marshall, for the second time in her life, finds herself an inmate of an army garrison and living a blithe and restful life after years of thankless toil. She was not originally one of Mrs. Lane's intimates in the home of their girlhood. They had known each other as children, had gone to dancing-school together, but Mabel Vincent's "set" was made up mainly from the young people whose parents were wealthy, and Miss Marshall's father had had to struggle hard for the wherewithal to "keep the wolf from the door." She was only seventeen when compelled to shift for herself. Her mother had been taken from her years before. She had been a loving and devoted daughter to her sad-faced father, and had comforted and blessed the humble home to which he had been forced to retire after some disaster which involved all his savings. And here she worked and studied; and here she gave herself up to the task of cheering his declining years until the feeble thread of his weary life snapped suddenly asunder and she was alone. For a few months she found a home in the army in the household of a relative stationed at the barracks near at hand. But, being determined to launch out for herself, she had sought the position of teacher to the younger children of a wealthy manufacturer and of companion to his wife. This she had held for a few years, sorely tried at times, yet never complaining. She had ample opportunity, at least, to read, to study, and to estimate character. Indeed, it was her keen perceptions that brought about the final rupture between herself and the wife of her employer, herself a distant connection. It was in the days of an early widowhood that Mrs. Lane found herself so frequently in Miss Marshall's company.

'ing the winter the young widow had spent in the South her
her's health was failing, and between the invalid and Miss Mar-
l there had sprung up a friendship and intimacy for which the
ghter at the time could hardly account. But when letter after
r came, telling how the girl managed to run over almost every day
spend an hour or two reading aloud, and then when Mrs. Vincent
n to intrust much of her correspondence to these willing hands,
el had learned to understand how unselfish was her devotion; and
: her mother's death there arose between these two young women—
one widowed, yet cherishing a new-born love, the other a wage-
ker and fancy free—a firm friendship which gained strength with
y month. It was to Georgia Marshall that Mabel, sobbing with
tion, had first confided the news of her engagement to Captain
e, and was amazed, yet rejoiced, at the fervor with which her friend
received the tidings. "At last!" she cried. "Oh, I am so thank-
He has loved you so truly,—so long!"

And so, when from brother Reginald's letter Mrs. Lane read the
y of Georgia Marshall's final difference with her employers, no
: was lost in demanding that she should come to their army home
what Mabel termed a good long rest. She was determined that
rgia should have just as good a time, just as much attention, just
ıany devotees, as anv girl that ever turned the heads of the bache-
of the Eleventh. For the week preceding the young lady's arrival
had been impulsively preparing the young fellows for Georgia's
ing and sounding her praises to many a listening ear. Who would
listen to those pretty lips? And therefore there was distinct sense
.isappointment among the subalterns when that much-lauded damsel
ped from the train at the little station and was rapturously enfolded
Mabel's heart. Jim Wallace, who was Hearn's especial chum, and
azy" Lee, declared that the new arrival was plain as a pipe-stem,
ept that her hands and feet were particularly slender and shapely.
l Mr. Martin, something of a connoisseur, declared that her eyes
e the only redeeming feature of her face. But these gentlemen had
ı her only at the station the afternoon of her arrival after a dusty
; and Hearn himself, being officer of the guard, was not presented
il the following day. That evening, however, he was her escort to
little gathering at the colonel's, and was far from content that she
not second the cordial invitation extended by Captain and Mrs.
ıe to come in and chat awhile.

But now, three days after her advent, as she comes down to the pretty breakfast-room, drinking in the soft balmy air that floats through the open window, Georgia Marshall's face is by no means plain. Her eyes are deep, dark, full of intelligence and life. Her mouth is large, but the teeth are pearly white and beautifully regular. The instant she speaks or smiles there is transfiguration in her looks, and her manner is all unaffected grace and gladness. Mabel raises her sweet face to meet the warm good-morning kiss. The captain lays down the letter he is conning over, and the perplexed expression vanishes, as he cordially greets her:

"Well, and how did the heroine of Fort Ryan rest last night?"

For every one, it seems, is talking of her pluck and promptitude,—of the oddity of the thing that she, a new arrival, should have been the only one to hear the brief colloquy between that unknown ruffian and the corporal of the guard, that she should have been the first to reach and succor the still senseless soldier, Brent.

IV.

Out along the grassy slopes the liveliest of trumpet-calls were ringing. Long lines of mounted skirmishers were advancing in mimic attack against the bluffs to the north of the wide valley. Assembly and deploy, rally and charge, followed each other in quick succession, and the piff-paff of carbines far out on the eastern flank was answered by sweeping dash of whirling sabres and thunder of galloping hoofs. Here and there the bright hues of the guidons lent color to the sombre effect of service dress and treeless prairie. And along the bold crests that spanned the northern sky-line groups of gayly-attired spectators, where parasol and fan, scarf and handkerchief, seemed fluttering in constant motion, watched the busy scene on the flats below. Several buggies and carry-alls had driven out from the neighboring town; three or four ambulances and Concord wagons were present from the post itself; and one light open barouche, drawn by two stylish bays and driven by a dignified negro, was evidently a centre of attraction for many eyes. Herein were seated Mrs. Lane and her guest, Miss Marshall, with their near neighbors, the wife and sister of Mr. Wharton, first lieutenant of Lane's troop. Several ladies from the fort had alighted from their various vehicles and were gathered in lively con-

versation about the barouche. Others, seated along the crest, were watching the evolutions, and commenting, as is their wont, on the horsemanship or voice of this officer or that. Every now and then some town buggy would drive close beside the one stylish-looking carriage, and its occupants would gaze with much curiosity upon the party therein. As a rule, these gazers were women, possibly friends of some of the post people, and this was not a matter to be much objected to. But one buggy, drawn by a gray horse, contained two men whose appearance Miss Marshall's keen eyes had noted as they passed the first time and closely scrutinized as they came down the next. One was flashy in dress; both were loud in their talk and swaggering in manner; both were smoking cigars of questionable origin, and one of them had the unmistakable cut of the German Jew. Any one could "place" him, even had he maintained silence, while, on the other hand, his coarse tones would in the blackest darkness have proclaimed his class. Both times they passed they stared boldly at the occupants of the carriage and critically inspected the team and appointments,—the second time driving close alongside and perceptibly slackening up to have a better look. Mrs. Lane flushed under such bold scrutiny, and the other ladies looked embarrassed and annoyed.

"Ugh! those horrid men!" spoke Mrs. Morris, the colonel's wife, who drove up just in time to catch a whiff of malodorous smoke. "Who are they? and what are they doing here?"

"One is a Mr. Schönberg," answered Mrs. Brodie, of the infantry. "He used to be a clerk here at the post trader's several years ago, I am told; but he has his own store in town now, and they say he's an awful cheat; no one will deal with him,—from the post at least. I don't know the other man at all. He is a stranger."

"They are particularly rude in manner, it seems to me," said Mrs. Morris. "I wish the colonel would keep such people away from the reservation."

"That man likes to be impudent, Captain Brodie says. He was put off the reservation some years ago and ordered never to come on again. He was caught smuggling liquor to the men, and had been for months lending them money at scandalous interest, and every one knew, and knows now, that he has the worst kind of influence on them. Indeed, Mrs. Morris, I wish the colonel would keep him out, although I suppose some of the men—the most vicious among them—would go to his place in town whenever they wanted money or liquor. He prob-

ably ventures out here because the Eleventh has just come to the garrison and he supposes Colonel Morris to be in ignorance of his character and of the orders that had been given by his predecessor. Major Kenyon knows him well enough; and the colonel of the —th Cavalry gave strict orders that he should not be allowed even to cross the bridge. But then none of your regiment know him, I suppose."

"Mr. Hearn knows him, Mrs. Brodie," promptly spoke a young lady who wore not inconspicuously the gold crossed rifles of the infantry.

"Why, how can that be, when he has been here no longer than the other officers of the Eleventh?" was the immediate reply.

"He was stationed here the winter following his graduation. He was still an additional second lieutenant then. You remember he did not get his promotion to the Eleventh until nearly a year after he left the Point. At least that is what Mr. McDonough says." And, Mr. McDonough being the owner of the crossed rifles, the damsel blushes becomingly.

"Oh, I remember," answered Mrs. Morris. "Mr. Hearn told us he had been stationed here for one winter; but he didn't seem to like it much then."

"Wasn't Mr. Hearn a little wild in those days?" inquired Mrs. Brodie. "It seems to me I have heard as much from some of the towns-people. You've no idea what gossips they are. Why, I've learned ever so much about your predecessors, the —th, that I never dreamed of before they left. A good deal about Mr. Hearn, too." And the lady looks tentatively at Mrs. Lane, as though inviting further question. But, glancing an instant from that young matron's flushing face, she finds Miss Marshall's big dark eyes fixed upon her with a scrutinizing, penetrating expression that in some way disheartens her. "I beg pardon, though," she hastens to say: "I think I have heard Mr. Hearn and Captain Lane were particular friends. Of course all this happened long ago, and he has probably outlived his youthful propensities."

"I never heard of Mr. Hearn as anything but a most dutiful and excellent officer," said Mrs. Lane, quietly. "Captain Lane is very fond of him."

"Certainly, if he had been a dissipated man, or a gambler, or—anything else," says Mrs. Morris, with proper spirit, "my husband would have been apt to know it; but——"

"Oh, it wasn't that," interposed Mrs. Brodie. And just at this ıtant three or four officers came cantering up the slope, taking adntage of a brief rest to pay their *devoirs* to the fair spectators.

Miss Marshall noted that, as this group approached, the buggy with objectionable occupants drove slowly away in the direction of the t. Half an hour later, as they were bowling rapidly homeward er the hard prairie road, they came upon the infantry battalion, also ırmishing. Everybody but the guard seemed out at drill, and the ıt was practically deserted. Entering the garrison limits, Cassius, ı colored coachman, guided his bays down the slope between the ard-house and the post trader's store and then up the incline to the ıthwest gate, preferring this road to going along the garrison in front the barracks of the men. The ladies were chatting blithely, but :h Miss Marshall and Miss Wharton noted that the buggy with the ıy horse was halted at the store railing, and at the door stood the o men in civilian dress and a third in the undress uniform of the ralry. All three stared intently at the occupants of the barouche :h that singular expression of mingled impudence and familiarity ıich is so marked a characteristic of the street loafers always hanging ıut the corners of certain thoroughfares of our Western cities where ı police are not yet instructed in those rules of civilization which reire such parties to be moving on. As the ladies were whirled by, r. Schönberg was seen to wink expressively, and the soldier, a darked, beetle-browed fellow, with his hands in his pockets, looked after ım and grinned.

"How annoyed Mr. Hearn would be," said Miss Wharton, "if he ıld have seen that performance!"

"What do you mean, Lucy? Those horrid men again?" asked r sister, who, being on the back seat with Mrs. Lane, had not seen ı soldier's face after they passed him by.

"The men are impertinent, certainly; one expects nothing better that class of people; but all the soldiers are so respectful and courıus to our ladies, generally, it is a pleasure to meet them. Haven't ıı noticed how different they are from—well, from that one, Miss ırshall?"

"Yes, indeed, not only here, but in the old artillery barracks where ınce visited. I am sure Mrs. Curtis, my cousin, knew the name of ery man in the two batteries, and always had a pleasant word for m when we met. They always took off their caps, though some of

the old sergeants, to be sure, saluted just as they would to an officer. This man was a contrast to the general rule."

"Perhaps he is not of our regiment," suggested Mrs. Lane, "and does not know the ladies."

"Unluckily he *is* of 'ours,'" said Mrs. Wharton. "That is Welsh, of C troop, and he was Captain Blauvelt's 'striker.' Mr. Wharton says he is a bad character, and that there was something very strange about the way the captain kept him by him all the time he was here. Why isn't he at drill, I wonder?"

"Possibly he's on guard," said Mrs. Lane. "The guard-house is only a stone's-throw away."

"He's never far from the guard-house," laughed Mrs. Wharton, as she sprang from the carriage at the Lanes' gate. "But he's not on guard to-day, unless he has taken off his belts. There! they have gone in to the bar. How I wish the colonel would close that place!"

Half an hour later, all in a glow after their rapid drill, four or five young officers strode, laughing and chatting, into the club-room at the store, and, throwing off belts, caps, and gauntlets, proceeded to bury their moustaches in the foaming glasses of cool beer which the attendant promptly supplied. Over on the other side of the establishment loud voices could be heard in animated talk, and presently Lieutenant Lee called out to the attendant to close the door leading over into the bar. Mr. Stone, the trader, entered at the moment, looking a trifle vexed.

"Those men are making quite a racket in there, Stone. Who are they?" asked the lieutenant.

"A couple of fellows from town, and Welsh, of C troop."

"Welsh!" exclaimed Mr. Hearn, who was glancing over the pages of a late paper. "Why, he has no business here! That man is on sick-report, under the doctor's care. Has he been drinking?"

"They've all been drinking, more or less. If I had known Welsh was on sick-report I would have told Billy not to sell him anything."

"Why, that man was told that he must stay in quarters all the time the command was at drill. It's a rule in the troop when a man is excused from any duty he must remain in quarters during the performance of it. Just tell him to step outside," said the lieutenant. "Say I wish to see him." And, picking up his cap and gauntlets, Mr. Hearn strolled from the room and went around to the east front. There, through the open door-way, the conversation within became distinctly audible, and Captain Brodie, of the infantry, who was officer of the

lay, returning from his morning inspection of the sentries down about the wood-yards, hearing the loud talk, turned and came rapidly over towards the store.

"Who do you say wants me?" Welsh's voice was heard to ask, as he stood unsteadily at the bar.

"The lieutenant,—Lieutenant Hearn, man: he's waiting for you outside," said the bar-tender, in tones that plainly told his anxiety.

"He be d——d! I ain't under his orders. I'm on sick-report. The post surgeon is the only man who can give me orders to-day, and don't you forget it."

"Go instantly, Welsh, or I'll call for the guard," said Mr. Stone. "You're more than half drunk now.—Don't give that man another drop, Kirby.—Go at once, Welsh." And now Lieutenant Hearn's erect figure appeared at the door-way.

"Welsh, come here," was all he said.

Slowly and with surly mien the soldier turned, glowering at his superior, set down the glass, and then slouched across the floor toward the young officer, but halted short of the door-way.

"Come out here, sir," said the lieutenant, sternly, stepping a little to one side.

"What for? I ain't on duty to-day," was the sullen answer.

"No arguments, Welsh. We've had too much of that from you. Go instantly to your quarters, and stay there. You got excused from drill on account of illness, and you know perfectly well the troop rule. You have no business to leave the barracks, much less to be drinking here."

"The doctor didn't give me any such orders," muttered Welsh, still hanging back, "and he's my commanding officer to-day."

For all answer Mr. Hearn sprang quickly forward, grasped the coat-collar of the soldier in a muscular hand, and, without violence, but with quick determination, marched him forth into the sunshine.

"By G—d, lieutenant, you'll pay for this!" screamed Welsh. "I don't allow any man to lay hands on me." And then, the instant he was released, he turned and shook his clinched fist at his young superior. Before another word could be said, the corporal of the guard with a couple of men, answering the signal of the officer of the day, came bounding to the spot.

"Take that man to the guard-house," said Captain Brodie, boiling

over with indignation.—"I'll attend to this case, Mr. Hearn. I witnessed the whole thing."

And, swearing and struggling in the grasp of the guard, Welsh was led away. Brodie saw him safely landed in the guard-room, then turned back to the store. The two civilians, who had silently witnessed this scene, were exchanging significant glances from time to time, and some low-whispered words. "His name's Brodie," Schönberg was heard to say. "You've got Hearn." But when the officer of the day reappeared at the door-way they turned their backs and were apparently absorbed in the discussion of the cocktails which the barkeeper somewhat grudgingly set before them. Brodie took a good look at the pair, but, as they carefully refrained from showing their faces, he remained but a moment at the door-way, and then, with a dissatisfied shake of the head, turned and walked over toward the garrison.

The trumpet was loudly pealing orderly call a few minutes later as the men came marching up from stables, their sabres clanking and their spurred heels ringing along the road. The instant the ranks were broken in front of the barracks a rush was made by dozens of their number for the cool refreshment of the trader's beer, and the bar was speedily crowded with their stalwart, dust-covered forms and ringing with their jovial voices. Some of them looked askance at the strangers, but Schönberg assumed an air of joyous good-fellowship.

"Just in time, boys," he called aloud. "Come right up and have it with me. Here, Billy, ask all these gentlemen to take a glass of beer. I always swore by the cavalry, anyhow: didn't I, Billy? That's right, boys: fill 'em all up; and when you get into town come around and see my place." And with that he began distributing printed business-cards among them.

Some of the men accepted the cards and the proffered hospitality; others seemed to hang back. One or two non-commissioned officers drew away to one side by themselves and signalled to the barkeeper that they wished to be served privately and not included in the Israelite's treat.

Meantime, Captain Brodie had gone in search of the commanding officer. The roll of the drum and the peal of the trumpet sounding mess-call speedily emptied the bar of the blue-bloused throng. But Mr. Schönberg and his companion had been drinking just enough to be aggressively hospitable. The next thing that Kirby knew, the former was lurching around the building with his friend in tow, and,

to his consternation, made as straight as his legs would permit for the door of the officers' club-room. Three or four of the young gentlemen were still there, sipping "shandygaff" and glancing through the papers. These looked up in evident surprise at the flushed features and flashy attire of the stranger who so confidently and jovially entered, his companion following closely in his wake.

"G'mornin', gen'lem'n," exclaimed Mr. Schönberg, holding forth a pudgy hand and beaming effusively upon Lieutenant Lee. "Welcome to Fort Ryan, gen'lem'n. Permit me to 'ntr'duce m'self: Mr. Levi Schönberg; 'n thiz's my partic-ic-l'r frien', Mr. Abrams,—Mr. Abrams, of Chicago, gen'lem'n. Miss'r Abrams, thiz's my frien'—Lieuten'nt—I—I didn't catch y'r name, sir."

"My name is Lee," said that young gentleman, shortly, and withdrawing the hand of which Mr. Schönberg had possessed himself.

"Lee,—Lieutenant Lee, of the Eleventh Cavalry, Mr. Abrams. Gen'lem'n, I knew all your old frien's of the —th that was here. We were very intimate, all of us, and—excuse me, I didn't catch y-your name, sir," turning now on Lieutenant Martin. "Gen'lem'n, we're just going to open a quart bottle—my 'xpense. Here, Billy, you son of a gun, bring in the champagne-glasses,—the best you've got. Pommery Sec—Pommery Sec's my wine, gen'lem'n; but if you prefer any other s-say so. W-w-what will you have, Mr.—Mr.——?"

"I don't drink at all, thank you," said Mr. Wallace, briefly. "Come, Martin, going up to luncheon?" he said, turning shortly from the pair of invaders.

"Don't go yet, gen'lem'n. Just one glash champagne,—good-fellowship, you know. Hope I don't 'fend?"

"Not a particle, sir; not a particle," said Martin. "Only you will have to excuse us. We can't drink and shoot too, you know. We've got to be on the rifle-range in half an hour.—Coming, Lee?" Mr. Lee had risen, and was about to move, when Mr. Schönberg threw his arm over the young gentleman's shoulders, striving to detain him.

"Kindly remove your arm, Mr.—Mr.——whatever your name may be," said Lee, his brows knitting and his mouth setting angrily. "I object to drinking champagne in the morning, and to being embraced by strangers at any time."

But at this moment Mr. Stone, the post trader, came hurrying in. He looked aghast when he caught sight of what was going on. Springing forward, he seized the Israelite roughly by the arm.

"Come out of this, Schönberg," he ordered. "You know perfectly well you've got no right whatever to come on this reservation, much less in this room."

"Pray do not disturb the gentlemen, Mr. Stone," said Martin. "We will gladly vacate in their favor."

"Don't you attempt to put me out of here, Stone," shouted the Jew. "I know you. I know what I'm about. You just touch me or let anybody else here in this d——d cowardly hole, and you'll see what'll happen."

The three officers had silently left the room, and were now quietly walking away from the building; but at the sound of a scuffle Lee stopped short.

"Here," he said, "those men are drunk and may do harm. We mustn't leave Stone in the lurch."

"What's the trouble?" queried Mr. Hearn, who had been inspecting the dinner of his troop and now came hurrying down the slope from the barracks. At this very instant, too, Schönberg came backing out of the club-room door, shaking his fist at Stone, who silently and yet threateningly followed; and Schönberg's voice was shrill with rage. Behind them both, his hands in the pockets of his spring overcoat, saying not one word, but glancing quickly about from man to man, followed Mr. Abrams, of Chicago.

"Mr. Hearn," said Stone, "you were here before I came, and you know this man: were not the orders given that he should never again show his face on the reservation, and that he should be put off if he came?"

"Exactly," answered Hearn. "And the sooner you leave it now, Mr. Schönberg, the better it will be for you."

"I'm minding my own business." (He called it "peeznez.") "You mind yours. Maybe you think I've forgot you; but I'll show you. I've had it in for you ever since four years ago, young feller, and just you keep away now, and don't you interfere, or you'll catch it where you don't expect it."

"I'll give you thirty seconds to get in that buggy and drive off, Mr. Schönberg," was Hearn's reply. "Unless you want to be hauled out by the guard, you will start at once. It isn't the first time I've found you stirring up insubordination here."

Schönberg reached his buggy, but kept up his furious language. His companion, still silent, scrambled in, his restless eyes wandering

from face to face. The thirty seconds were well-nigh gone when the Jew, aided by Stone's supporting arm, lurched into his seat and picked up the reins. Shaking the whip over Stone's head, he shrieked so that all could hear,—

"By G—d! you may dink you've heard the last of dis—dis outrage; but you'll see! you'll see! If you don't get roasted for dis, dare ain't any newspapers in dis country. I got *your* name down four years ago, Mr. Second Lieutenant Hearn, and now, by G—d! you'll see——"

And then, with an angry lash of his whip upon the flanks of his startled gray, Schönberg with his companion drove rapidly down the road past the stables. As they turned the corner, Mr. Abrams drew from his overcoat pocket a fat note-book and glanced back over his shoulder with a significant smile.

V.

An anxious group had gathered that afternoon over near the hospital. Corporal Brent's symptoms were all indicative of concussion of the brain, and, though the surgeon said there had been no fracture of the skull, he was fearful that fatal consequences might ensue. Among his comrades of the infantry battalion the young soldier was by long odds the most popular and beloved man in the ranks, and that he should have been "slugged," as they expressed it, in the discharge of his duty by some scoundrel of a cavalryman, was developing a very ugly feeling at the post. Murphy and Scanlan had been sent to Coventry among their own comrades for having lent a willing ear to the wiles of the tempter and so led on to the tragedy that followed. Colonel Morris had ordered that Goss should be confined in a cell apart from the ordinary prisoners; but when confronted with the array of a dozen garrison malefactors, neither Murphy nor Scanlan was able to fix on any one of them as the man who accosted them the night of the tragedy and gave them drink at the southwest gate. Goss was like him in size and beard, they said, but that was all that they could assert. It was enough, however, to prompt some of the infantrymen on guard to scaring the prisoner's life almost out of him. He piteously implored the officer of the day at his next visit not to keep him there,—the "dough-boys," he said, had sworn they would lynch him if Brent died,—and again and again he declared himself innocent and the

victim of some conspiracy. When Colonel Morris was informed of the threat, he decided to send the man to the neighboring town and the custody of the civil authorities, that he might be tried by their courts in the event of a fatal termination to the corporal's injuries, but waited until afternoon before issuing the orders in the case.

Major Kenyon, who had taken a deep interest in Brent for some months past, and who had recommended him to study for a commission, was just coming from the hospital ward when Mr. Hearn, passing by the sad-faced group of soldiers who were chatting at the steps, came quickly forward to meet the field-officer:

"How does he seem now, major? I had intended coming earlier, but was detained."

"Just holding his own. I wouldn't go in, if I were you, Hearn. I think footsteps only worry the doctor now.—There is no great change, men," he kindly spoke, as the little knot of soldiers respectfully saluted and looked inquiringly at him. "He has a good fighting chance yet, with his splendid constitution. We can only hope for the best.—Come on, Hearn; I want to ask you something. What's this I hear about your having trouble with that fellow Schönberg?"

"Oh, I had no especial trouble, major: he was out here drunk, I should say, and had got that man Welsh of my troop drinking, so that the fellow was insubordinate again, and the officer of the day ordered him confined. Then Schönberg, it seems, went into the club-room, and, after he had been treating the men to beer in the bar, insisted on treating to champagne and introducing himself to several of the officers who were there. Stone came in and ordered him out, and when I happened along, hearing the noise, he appealed to me as to what the orders in his case had been, and, as I knew that he had been forbidden even to come on the reservation, I told him that if he didn't go, and go at once, I would send some of my men to escort him. Of course he was very violent and abusive, but I paid no further attention to it."

"D—n that villain!" said the major. "He has done more to demoralize the men in this post than all the toughs and gamblers in the community combined. Our fellows have got to know him so thoroughly that the best class of them, at least, steer clear of him entirely; but there was a time when a great many of them never went to town without getting drink or money at his place and having to pay very heavily for it afterwards."

"Oh, I knew him well the first winter I ever spent here," said Hearn. "He was clerk in the sutler's store then; and it was just before I left that he was discharged by his employer, who is dead now. Then he came prying around the barracks at night, bringing liquor to the men, and gamblers out with him from town, playing in the non-commissioned officers' room, fleecing them so badly that they finally complained, and then the order was issued that he shouldn't be permitted on the reservation at all. He had a friend with him to-day whom he was showing around and whom he insisted on introducing: Martin says he called him Abrams, from Chicago."

"Abrams! I don't know anything about him, but the mere fact of his being here with Schönberg is enough to make me look upon him with suspicion. They were having a confidential talk with your man Welsh, I'm told. Now, what do they know of him? where have they met him before?"

"I can't say, major: he was in the captain's 'household brigade,' and it is only recently that I have had anything to do with him. Of course he has been in and out of town a dozen times the past month, so he never lacked opportunity."

"The doctor tells me you had to haul him out of the bar-room by the coat-collar, and that he threatened and abused you. Take my advice, Hearn; don't ever touch a soldier, no matter how wrong he may be. You should have called for a file of the guard if he would not obey."

"I had no authority over the guard, major, and I had over Welsh. I simply stepped inside, collared him, and marched him out into the sunshine; then Captain Brodie came—— Ah! here's the colonel."

They had turned into the quadrangle at the moment, and came face to face with the post commander, who, followed by his orderly, was crossing the green parade, swinging his cane in the nervous and energetic way peculiar to him.

"Mr. Hearn," he said, in his quick, almost gruff manner, "the officer of the day tells me he has confined Welsh, of your troop, for insubordination and for threatening you, and that he had been at the store with some men from town who were forbidden the reservation: you know the men, I'm told."

"Only one of them, sir. I knew that Jew, Schönberg, the first winter I was stationed here."

"Well, Captain Brodie says he also used threatening language to-

wards you. What does it mean? What could he have to threaten you with?"

"Nothing, sir," answered Hearn, promptly. "At least," and now the hot blood seemed bounding to his temples,—"at least nothing that I have any fear of. He is a blackguard, and I was utterly inexperienced when I came here, so that he got me into some embarrassment in money-matters at the time. It was settled long ago, and I have no idea what he thinks he can trump up now. He used to be clerk and attendant at the store here when old Braine——"

"Yes, yes, I know," said the colonel, impatiently. "It is odd that you young gentlemen will put yourselves in the hands of such people. Now, that fellow has been kept off the reservation all these years, yet here he comes again because he seems to think he has a hold on you, and dares to disobey orders as a consequence."

"I protest, colonel," said Hearn, flushing hotly, "I am in no wise responsible for his actions. You can have the details of the trouble he gave me at any time, and I can show you the papers that long since ended the matter. He has no hold on me, sir, whatever." And the young officer stood before his commander looking both grieved and indignant at the imputation conveyed in the latter's words.

"Well, well, Mr. Hearn, I do not mean to say that he has any ground, only you young gentlemen cannot be too careful about your associates. Contact with such *canaille* as this must defile you just as much as pitch.—Now, Major Kenyon, how is Corporal Brent?"

Thus having the last word, and having conveyed to the young subaltern a distinct sense of rebuke, Colonel Morris abruptly intimated his desire that nothing further should be said upon the subject. So long as he chose to transfer his attention to Major Kenyon the commander could, of course, prevent further remonstrance; but as Mr. Hearn stood there in evident readiness to resume his own defence, and as the colonel knew very well that he had hardly been fair to him, since Hearn's character had been most exemplary ever since his joining the regiment, his better nature told him that he ought in further words to let the young fellow down easily, as the army expression goes. For reasons of his own, Colonel Morris did not wish to unbend, however, in presence of the infantry major, his second in command. No sooner had he finished his inquiries than he turned to Mr. Hearn again:

"I do not mean to say, sir, that any reason exists for that man's *threats, only that* I consider it most unfortunate that you or any young

officer should ever have put himself in the power of that class of people."

Hearn would have retorted, but for a moment he could not find words at once respectful and convincing. The colonel, having delivered this final volley from his entire line, now promptly retired before the other side could rally, and, as though covered by the smoke of his own fire, tramped away across the parade, leaving the two officers gazing silently after him. The orderly, with hand to cap-visor, sprang briskly past the pair and stalked away in the wake of his cane-twirling commander.

At last Kenyon spoke: "Come, Hearn, when you're as old as I am you'll not fret yourself over glittering generalities like that. Every colonel, I suppose, is full of wise saws and modern instances and must shoot 'em off occasionally. I'll be just as full, no doubt, if I live to be a colonel. It has taken me thirty years' soldiering to get out of company duty, and the Lord only knows how long it will be before I can swap this gold leaf for the silver. Come along, man; I'm going to Lane's a moment to ask the ladies to drive to town this evening, and there's nothing like the women-folk to help one out of the grumps. There they are on the piazza now,—the women, not the grumps. And, by the powers! yonder comes young Lee in his riding-boots to ask Miss Marshall to try a canter."

But Hearn shook his head: "I can't go now; I'm all upset by this thing, major. By heaven! isn't it enough to make a man swear, that a low cad like that can come into his daily life and poison the ears of his friends and associates with slander and innuendo, and that I have to listen in silence to such rebuke as that the colonel gave me?"

"Well, that's what you get for being in the army, my boy. Three days ago you were taking issue with me at Lane's because I said if I had my life to live over again the army was the very last profession I'd seek in this country, and you thought you loved it. Here's Lane, now," he continued, as the gray-eyed captain strolled up and laid his hand kindly on the young officer's shoulder.

"I'm trying to pull Hearn out of the grumps, Lane. Haul him along with us, or he'll be doing something desperate. You remember how enthusiastic he was three days ago,—loved his profession, would rather be a soldier than a railway magnate, wouldn't swap his commission for a million in the four-per-cents. Fetch him along."

And between *them, half* laughing, half sympathetic, the two officers

convoyed their junior towards the shaded veranda where were seated Mrs. Lane, Miss Marshall, and other ladies busy with their needlework and probable gossip. Miss Wharton was of the party, and there were two or three callers. They had noted the colonel's soldierly figure as he tramped across the parade, and were quick to see the two officers coming along the gravel walk. Mrs. Lane half rose, and, smiling brightly, bade them enter. Forage-caps were raised in acknowledgment and salutations exchanged, but the trio hung outside. The major by this time was talking vehemently. Lane was looking grave and anxious. The same perplexed expression was on his face that had been noted at the breakfast-table when reading that letter just before Miss Marshall's entrance the day before. Hearn's face was clouded.

"How can they encourage Major Kenyon to be dilating on his pet hobby!" petulantly exclaimed Mrs. Graves. "He is the most pessimistic, cynical, prosy old crank in the whole service, and will bore them to death. There, now he's backed them up against the fence, and there is no hope for them.—*Do* come in here out of the hot sunshine, Major Kenyon: you can harangue all you like here just as well." But Kenyon paid no attention to his fair comrade of the infantry. For years the women of the —th Foot had made common cause against him, despite the fact that he was one of their most devoted admirers. When Mrs. Lane again called to them to come in and sit on the veranda, however, the captain calmly took his two friends by the elbows and steered them through the gate. Another moment, and the ladies were settling back into their seats, and the major had the floor.

"Yes, Mrs. Lane, I *am* a crank, as my good friend Mrs. Graves has doubtless told you: I have reason to be, and the crank's wound up to-day. Your husband and Hearn here have been combating my views about the desirability of the army as a vocation, and—— I crave your pardon, Miss Marshall, for 'talking shop.'"

"I'm deeply interested, Major Kenyon," responded that young lady. "Go on, I beg of you."

"Well, my views are founded on long experience, and not the very pleasantest. I say—and I say it after years of reflection—that the more a man may love his profession, the better a soldier he is, the more jealous of the honor and reputation of his cloth, the less can he afford to take a position in the army of the United States. Why? Why, because the great mass of the people have no conception whatever of the *duties that devolve* upon us, of the life we lead, of the trials we en-

counter. In time of peace they think they have no use whatever for an army, and declare that we do nothing but loaf and drink and gamble. They are *taught* to think so by the press of our great cities, and, never having a chance to see the truth for themselves, they accept the views of their journalists, who really know no more about it than they do, but do not hesitate to announce as fact what exists only in their imagination. Ever since the war these attacks in the papers have gradually increased from year to year. Now, my home is in Chicago, and, naturally, I read the Chicago papers. I was five years tramping, scouting, skirmishing all through Arizona and Wyoming without ever seeing the inside of a city or even of a railway-car. We lived on hard tack and bacon and what we could pick up when we couldn't get them. We lost many a good soldier in Indian battle during that time, and at last I got a wound that laid me up and sent me home. I hadn't seen the place in seven years. My boyhood had been spent there. Dozens of my relatives and old school-mates lived there, and I looked forward with pleasure to the rest and joy I should have at the old firesides. I didn't suppose that people really believed all the outrageous flings the *Times* and the *News* and the *Sun* and the *Herald*, let alone the *Trades-Union Gazette* and the *Arbeiter Zeitung*, had indulged in at the expense of the army. But I had to wear my uniform for three or four days about the old home, and not only street-boys but grown men respectably dressed jeered and hooted at the dress that for years in the rebel South and all over the frontier had never been treated with insult. Old school-mates patronizingly asked me over their card-tables at the clubs, what on earth I could find to do with myself in the army, and why I didn't quit it and come in here and try to be something. You know perfectly well, Lane, that when you were recruiting in Cincinnati you had just such questions put to you, and you had been through one campaign after another for years. The general manager of the Midland Pacific, every mile of whose road through the Sioux country I and my men had helped to build by standing off the Indians day after day and having many a sharp fight doing it,—this general manager, I say, met me at the Union League and asked me how I had 'managed to kill time on the frontier,' and remarked that it must be a very demoralizing life. He was out next day in a circular cutting down the wages of some twenty thousand employees ten per cent., but thought the rank and file of the army were treated rather like dogs by their superiors. A man, he said, must be at the lowest ebb of self-respect to enlist in the army; as though

every one of his army of twenty thousand hard-working, hard-slaving men was not infinitely more at the mercy of a single official than could ever happen in the army of the United States. My own people, by Jove! were so impressed by what they had been reading for years in the papers of army life and army officers that they were perpetually urging me to quit the service and come in and begin life over again at forty-five,—clerking or something. Why, only ten years before, their homes had been rescued from the mob, after police and militia had been whipped to the winds, only by the prompt rush of the regulars from the frontier. Oh, they lionized the 'shoulder-strapped autocracy' then, and for just about one week it wasn't fashionable for a decent paper to lampoon them; but the moment the danger was over their gratitude fled with their anxiety. I tell you, the papers that are sold for two and three cents in our big cities *have* to pander to the prejudices of the masses to keep alive, and there is no surer way of tickling the palates of the populace than by ridiculing or abusing the army officers, and in lending themselves to this the editors, of course, influence the judgment of people of a much better class,—the great middle class, so to speak, of the whole nation."

"It isn't at all so where I come from," interposed Hearn, promptly. "At home all my kinsfolk are proud of my being in the army."

"Ah! you're a Southerner, Mr. Hearn, and your people are all Americans. All through the North, however, we have an immense foreign population that has fled from the Old World to escape military duty. They hate the very sight of a soldier. Three-fourths of the people of some of our big cities are of foreign birth or parentage. The papers seek their patronage, and in truckling to them they prejudice northern Americans against their own friends and relatives who have been idiots enough to become their defenders. It was bad enough before the war, God knows, but it's worse now. People wonder how it was that it took the North with three million soldiers so long to subdue the South with less than a fourth that number. Now I see nothing to wonder at whatever. The South has always respected the profession of arms; the North has always derided it. Lee with sixty thousand Americans at his back, and only sixty thousand, knocked sixty thousand out of Grant's overwhelming force between the Rapidan and the James. Lee's sixty thousand had the love of every Southern heart to sustain *them. How* many of the North, think you, had no personal interest *in that struggle?* How many thousands of the North to-day care

nothing whatever for that flag,"—and the major pointed to the standard floating over the garrison,—"and only ask to be let alone to make money their own way? God knows, I'm as loyal a Union man as ever lived, but I don't like to think of the new generation that has sprung up in this country: all soldiers in the South; all—what? in the North."

And old Kenyon, flushed, almost breathless, paused and mopped his brow with a silk handkerchief as red as his face.

There was silence a moment. Captain Lane's kindly features wore an expression half grave, half quizzical. Hearn had edged around nearer where Miss Marshall was sitting, and that young lady had dropped her dainty embroidery in her lap and was listening attentively. Something in the gravity of her demeanor gave Kenyon encouragement.

"Now, you, Miss Marshall, are accustomed to social circles in the North. Tell me frankly, now, did you ever hear men prominent in civil life express any other opinion of the profession of an army officer than that it was rather a useless, dawdling, and unworthy occupation?"

"In peace times, I presume you mean, major?"

"In peace times, certainly; though the necessity for its existence then is as great. You recollect what Washington said: 'In time of peace prepare for war.'"

"I confess that men who lead narrow lives in business or professions and never get beyond the groove are apt to say something of what you suggest, major. But men who think and travel, especially those who have visited our frontier, come back with feelings of much admiration for the army, officers and men."

"Then I'll rest my case with the men who think and travel," said Hearn, laughing brightly. "Come, you old cynic, don't make me believe I have no friends outside my profession, when it sometimes seems as though I hardly had one in it."

"Now, there you go, Hearn," interrupted Kenyon. "That's just exactly where you're wrong. You would trust to the few travelled and educated men; but what are they among the mass of voters, who know nothing of the army but what they read in the papers? Do you ever see anything good of an army officer in any paper until he's dead? Never, unless it's something put in by a 'newspaper soldier;' and God save me from more of them. What could your thinkers and travellers do, *even if they* would condescend to bestir themselves in

our behalf,—which they don't,—as against the masses and the press? No paper in the land is so low but what it can hurt and sting you."

"How? I should like to know."

"How? Simply by printing any low scandal at your expense; and no matter what your record or your character may have been, no matter how damnable a lie may be asserted of you, the mass of the people will read and believe, and your natural protectors—the generals and the War Department—will call upon you to defend yourself against even anonymous assault."

"You do not mean that, major, do you?" asked Miss Marshall.

"I do, emphatically. I have seen officers time and again compelled to report to division or department head-quarters that they were innocent of allegations made by nameless scribblers in the daily press. I have seen the most abstemious men in the army heralded as drunk on duty by a sheet that withheld the name of its informant. But all the same the officers were called to account. When we were sent to aid the marshals in breaking up the whiskey-distilleries in Brooklyn; when the first colored cadets were sent to West Point; when Chicago was burned and we had to shoot some prowling robbers to rid the ruined city of the gang that flocked there; when we were hurried in again in '77, and all the great cities of the North were practically at the mercy of the mob;—at every one of those times, and heaven only knows how many times between, the press made scandalous assertions by *name* about one officer or another. In most cases there was no truth whatever in what was said; in every case, however, the officer was compelled by his superiors to establish his innocence. By heaven! I'll never forget our experience in '77. We were ordered to lose not an instant in reaching Chicago. The strikers had side-tracked the Ninth on one road and blocked the cavalry on another line, and when we stopped for water the railway-men attempted to leave us there. I put Lieutenant Nairn with a small guard at the engine and kept the strikers off, using no force, saying not a word, making no reply to jeers and insult; but the leading paper came out next day and denounced Nairn and me as being armed ruffians, declared we were both reeling drunk, and gave most outrageous details of things that never happened. Of course, as army officers were the targets of this abuse, the article was copied in Eastern papers. Nairn was a man who never *drank* a drop; had a magnificent war record; was a general officer of *volunteers, and* a gentleman honored throughout the whole service.

All the same he and I were compelled to submit written denials to department head-quarters, and all the satisfaction we ever got was that the editor said his reporter had perhaps been unduly influenced by the prejudiced statements of the strikers. Why hadn't this occurred to him in the first place? Why didn't he *know* that these men, furious at being thwarted, would say anything to revenge themselves after we had gone on our way? He *did;* but because just such sensational articles would make his paper sell among the masses, and because he knew that where the army officer had one friend he had a score of enemies, that was enough for him. Now, that, and a host of similar experiences, is why I say that no son of mine shall ever take up so thankless a profession. Of course if the country were in danger, the flag assailed, he would fight as I would. As for me, I'm too old a dog to learn new tricks, and having lived my life in the service I must die in it." And again the major paused for breath. "You think I'm an extremist, don't you, Lane?" he finally asked.

"Perhaps so, major, although I admit that the press has been most unjust; but I think we have more friends among the people than you give us credit for."

"Not one bit of it! You think the press knows better now and wouldn't do it all over again. That's what Hearn here would say. Now, you mark my words, gentlemen, so few are our friends in this country,—that is, in the North at least,—either in the press or the public, that any story at the expense of an army officer would be eagerly published by almost any paper in the land, and used as a text by hundreds of editors all over the nation to warrant a vicious stab at our whole array, and the people far and wide would eagerly read, and even those who declared they didn't believe it would be influenced."

"I can't think our people are such fools as to believe yarns that are evidently manufactured to malign," said Hearn, stoutly. "Everybody ought to know that it is from deserters, or dishonorably discharged men, or low camp-followers, that the reporters get their scandals."

"*Ought* to know! yes, I admit it. I have no doubt that the managing editors who publish the things *do* know; but the people don't. And now what has been your own experience, Hearn? How can you blame the people for believing what they read in the papers, when not an hour ago your own colonel, who knows you well, virtually rebuked you because of the vicious ravings of as unprincipled a cad as there is in all Kansas?"

And Georgia Marshall, looking up in surprise, saw the quick flush that leaped to the young soldier's face.

VI.

"Fred, what did Major Kenyon mean by his reference to Mr. Hearn and some story about him?" asked Mrs. Lane that evening, as the captain was locking up after their guests had departed. Miss Marshall, who was glancing over a photograph-album, closed it and rose as though to leave the parlor.

"No, don't go," said Captain Lane, promptly. "I was sorry that Kenyon made any reference to the matter, but, since he did, I want you both—indeed, I think Hearn told me because he wanted you both—to know all about the affair. He had never mentioned it to me, nor to any one, I fancy, before, because there was no need. It was all settled some time ago, but of course he felt sensitive about it. He was a green young lieutenant when he joined here six years ago. This Jew, Schönberg, was clerk at the sutler's. The officers dealt very largely with him then, for town was not as accessible as it is now. The former post trader was a jovial, kindly sort of fellow, who was much liked by everybody, but he left his books and his business in the hands of Schönberg. I have often heard how open-handed he was with his money, and how officers, and men too, never had to go to any banker or scalper if they needed money for an emergency. Anything a friend of his wanted was at his service. Hearn began as a good many boys of his genial temperament are apt to do at a big and expensive post,—got in debt, for everybody wants to give credit to young officers just starting, and then the bills come in all at one swoop afterwards. 'Old Cheery,' as they used to call Braine, saw Hearn's trouble, and insisted on lending him money out of his own pocket. It wasn't a store matter at all; it wasn't entered on Hearn's account. He paid it back in instalments to the old man himself, or was doing it when he received his promotion and had to make the long and expensive journey to Arizona. Except cadets when first joining, officers are not paid advance mileage; they must raise the money as best they can, and it is mighty hard on a young lieutenant. 'Old Cheery,' of course, advanced Hearn another two hundred dollars. The first was paid, all but fifty of it, and he *told the boy* when he left that he had taken a big liking to him, and *that he could just* return that at his convenience; but Hearn never lost

a day after getting to his new post and obtaining his mileage, but bought a draft for two hundred dollars and sent it to the old man at once, and said in his letter that he would remit the balance of the account and his store bill just as soon as possible. 'Old Cheery' was a man who never wrote letters, but Hearn got a line from his wife, saying that Mr. Braine had received his pleasant letter with its enclosure and sent his best wishes. A few months afterwards the old man suddenly died; the widow moved to town; a new trader came and took the store; and when Hearn sent his next remittance of fifty dollars to the widow he was surprised in the course of a few months afterwards to receive what purported to be a statement of his account with the estate of Thomas Braine, deceased,—a store-bill amounting to over a hundred dollars, and no less than five hundred dollars in borrowed money. He wrote instantly to a friend at Fort Ryan to see the widow and have things straightened out. He protested that his store-bill could not be more than forty or fifty dollars; that old Braine had lent him two hundred dollars at one time, which he had paid back to him all but fifty, and two hundred more when he went to Arizona, which he had instantly repaid, so that the total amount of his indebtedness could not exceed one hundred dollars. But the widow said she didn't know anything about it. Mr. Schönberg had kindly taken charge of all her affairs, and he had the books and everything and all the correspondence and knew all about it. Hearn, of course, refused to pay anything but the hundred dollars. Then they threatened him with legal proceedings, and next they importuned him through the War Department, which, just as old Kenyon says, believed the blackguard and called on Hearn for an explanation. It nearly drove the young fellow mad. He was proud and sensitive. He couldn't bear to think of the publicity and scandal. He had never given Braine any receipt for the money obtained from him; never had asked any for the money repaid. He was too honorable to deny the fact of having borrowed the money, yet had nothing to show, the old man being dead, for the money that he had returned. I had heard something of his trouble, but was ordered East on recruiting service just then, and began to get into troubles of my own, for it was there I met this young woman." And the captain, with eyes that belied his words, turned fondly to his wife. 'The next thing I heard of Hearn, the matter had all been most fortunately settled,—thanks to one of our old captains, who, it seems, had known both *Schönberg and the* widow Braine. He took the matter up,

and the Jew was glad to drop it. Even Hearn does not know what hold he had on them, but it was settled then and there. Hearn paid a hundred dollars, and Schönberg, I am told, had to pay the lawyer whom he had employed. I often think, though, how hard would have been the young fellow's fate if there had been no one to come to the rescue. There isn't a better soldier or braver officer in the Eleventh to-day than Hearn, and he is just as steady as a rock; but soldiers as good as he have been driven out of the army for lack of some such friend as came to him in his extremity."

"You would have helped him, Fred dear," said Mrs. Lane, fondly, crossing over to the captain and stroking the grizzled stubble about his brows as though it were the loveliest hair in the world. Lane possessed himself of the soft white hand and threw his arm about her shapely waist.

"I would certainly, had I known, but nine out of ten do not happen to be able to help, even when our inclinations would lead. And, then, however much we believed in Hearn's story and Schönberg's rascality, who could prove it?"

"Who did prove it?" asked Miss Marshall, after a pause.

"Well, no one, that I know of. All we know is that Schönberg was glad to drop the matter three years ago when Captain Rawlins first tackled the case. Hearn says he has never alluded to it from that time to this until the fellow's language to-day; but that was only some vague drunken threat."

"But if, on the contrary, it should prove that he meant to make more trouble for Mr. Hearn," asked Miss Marshall, "is Captain Rawlins here?"

"By Jove!" exclaimed the captain, starting suddenly to his feet, his face growing as suddenly grave and sad, "that possibly explains the letter that came to me yesterday morning. I was reading it as you came down to breakfast,—a low, anonymous thing, and I burnt it. Now I wish I had kept that."

"About Mr. Hearn, was it?" asked Mrs. Lane, anxiously.

"Yes; and now I can begin to understand it, too.—Miss Marshall," said he, turning impressively towards her, "your question goes to the very bottom of this case. The friend who blocked their game three years ago is gone: Rawlins was killed in the last campaign in Arizona."

"Oh, Fred!" cried Mrs. Lane. "And was there no one else who *had helped Mr.* Hearn?"

"No one but our old Rawlins, Mabel; and of all men to help him ow, he would have been the most valuable here with our new colonel, or he and Morris had been devoted and intimate friends in war days, nd I am told the colonel was deeply cut up by the news of Rawlins's leath. There was something romantic about their early friendship. Captain Rawlins was a widower whose wife had died within a few ears of her marriage, and I have heard that both he and Morris, when young officers, were in love with her, but that she had chosen Rawlins."

"But, Captain Lane," said Miss Marshall, whose thoughts seemed less fixed upon the romantic than upon the practical side of the case, "surely Mr. Hearn has receipts in full for this amount?"

"I so understood him, Miss Marshall; and yet I do not know the nature of the papers to which he refers. I think he said that he had her letter; but that is of less value now."

"And why?" asked Miss Marshall.

"Because the widow married Schönberg."

"'Then must the Jew be merciful,'" quoted Miss Marshall.

And for a few moments not another word was spoken. It was hat young lady herself who broke the silence:

"Perhaps you think me unduly apprehensive, Captain Lane. 'hat man's face made a powerful impression upon me when I saw him)-day, and perhaps Mabel has told you something of my own experi- nce in trying to retrieve my father's fallen fortunes when he was too ld and broken to do anything for himself. I learned then the worth- ssness of spoken words, and that nothing but written contracts and eceipts were binding."

She had hardly ceased speaking when the gate was heard to swing n its rusty hinges, a resolute step creaked across the piazza, and some- ody was fumbling at the bell-knob.

"Who can that be at this hour of the night?" asked Mrs. Lane, as ie captain went to the door. The bolts were drawn back, and a rush f cold night-wind swept in, causing the lamps to suddenly flare and moke.

"Please, sir, is the doctor here?" a voice was heard to ask.

"No," answered Lane. "What's wanted? He left here about wenty minutes ago. Have you been to his quarters?"

"Yes, sir; and they told me he was here, at Captain Lane's. Corporal Brent is took worse, sir, and the steward thinks the doctor ought to see him. He's wild like, and raving."

"Mabel, dear, I'll be back in a moment," said Lane, reappearing at the parlor door. "Don't wait for me: I'm going to see if the doctor is at Hearn's. They went away together. Corporal Brent is reported worse."

Throwing his cavalry "circular" over his shoulders, Lane stepped forth into the night. It was moonless and pitchy dark. The lamps around the quadrangle were burning brightly, but hardly sufficed to illumine more than a small sphere in the surrounding gloom. Across the wide valley a distant ruddy spark showed where some farm homestead was still alive; and far away to the westward the electric lights, swinging high over the thoroughfares of the thriving town, shone with keen, cold lustre, and were mirrored in some deep, unruffled pool of the stream. Turning his back on these, the captain trudged briskly down the walk, the hospital attendant following, and opened the little gate some fifty yards away from his own. As he surmised, the doctor was here, for his voice, and Kenyon's too, could be heard before Lane tapped at the door.

"Come in," shouted Hearn, in answer to the signal, and the captain entered.

"You are asked for at the hospital, doctor. They say Brent is delirious."

At this the medical man dropped the cigar he had but half smoked and left the room. Lane was for going with him, but Hearn begged him to stay:

"No time like the present, captain, and I want you to see the papers in the celebrated case of Braine *vs.* Hearn while Major Kenyon is here. I'll beg Mrs. Lane's pardon in the morning, and not detain you more than a minute."

Standing against the wall in the midst of what had been old Blauvelt's sitting-room was a plain wooden table with a pigeon-holed desk upon it, the lid of which, turned down, made the writing-shelf. In the pigeon-holes were numerous folded papers, well-filled envelopes, packages of tobacco, a brier-root pipe, a pair of old shoulder-straps, several pairs of gloves, some fishing-tackle, some *carte-de-visite*-sized photographs, a damaged sabre-knot, and the inevitable accumulation of odds and ends with which a subaltern's field-desk is apt to be littered. But the pigeon-holes had been quite systematically labelled. There were compartments bearing the legends "letters unanswered,"

"letters answered," "personals," "bills paid," "bills unpaid" (both impartially occupied), "pay-accounts," "maps," "field-notes," etc.

"I never knew the necessity of having some sort of system about these matters until after the experience I have been telling you of, captain; and I am indebted to dear old Rawlins for it. You never met him, did you, Major Kenyon?"

"No; except just for a moment in the Shenandoah Valley during the war. He was commanding his regiment then."

"Yes, and lived to be shot down in cold blood by a lot of ambuscading Apaches nearly a quarter of a century after, and—nothing but a captain of cavalry."

"He had some little property here in town at one time," said Kenyon. "That was nearly ten years ago, though, and it went at a sacrifice, I'm told. Perhaps it was while he was a local tax-payer that he got to know your Hebrew friend of to-day."

"He never told me what he knew of him, beyond the mere fact that he was dishonest and a born mischief-maker. But the moment he took that case up for me Schönberg dropped it. For some reason the Jew was afraid of the old man, as every one called Rawlins."

Hearn was turning over in his hand, as he spoke, a package of folded papers held together by elastic snaps. Removing the upper band, he began looking over the docketing at the top of each paper.

"Rawlins, himself, endorsed this particular packet for me, and showed me how it should be done," he said. "I've often thought that if we could drop out a little slice of the mathematical course at the Point, and have some coaching in this sort of thing, how much better fitted we should be for the every-day duties of life. Now, I—— Why, this is odd. I certainly had those papers in this very packet not three weeks ago. I saw them the day I moved in here. I remember overhauling this very desk at the time."

Nervously he ran through the package again, his fingers rapidly turning the folded pages, his face paling with sudden apprehension.

"There was a letter here from Captain Rawlins, two receipts of Schönberg's, and the letter from Mrs. Braine, all bundled up together, and the endorsement of each in Rawlins's handwriting."

Then he threw down the packet and began pulling out the papers in other pigeon-holes, Kenyon and Lane standing silently by. In vain he searched. Not a vestige of the desired proofs could be found. It

was with a white face and eyes that were full of trouble that he turned upon his seniors:

"My God! those papers are gone!"

"Look in your trunk, man," said Lane, kindly: "don't give up yet;" while Kenyon, himself, began a search on his own account in the now disordered desk.

"Was this always kept locked when you went out, Hearn?" asked the major. "Surely such important papers ought not to be left lying around loose."

"Locked? Yes. At least I never was away for any time without locking it. Sometimes, just going out to receive reports at roll-call, I would not lock up; for who would want to rob a fellow of papers of no value to any one but the owner?"

The major looked grave. Lane's face was full of anxiety which he hardly knew how to conceal. Both well knew the almost universally careless habits of the bachelor officers in garrison. Their doors are never locked; their rooms are empty half the time, and their pocket-books empty ordinarily as their rooms; their books, papers, desks, even trunks, almost always lying unguarded about the premises. Servants and orderlies move from house to house unquestioned, and the rear doors are unfastened day and night. "We have nothing worth stealing," is the general theory, "so why bother about locking an empty stable?"

"Who is your servant?" asked Kenyon, brusquely.

"Our black boy, Jake. He has taken care of my rooms and traps for three years, and works for Wallace and Martin, too. He's as honest a nigger as ever lived; has been with the regiment longer than I have."

"Yes; Jake isn't half a bad boy. But was there no one else who had the run of the premises?"

"Not a soul. Jake, himself, is rarely here except when at work."

There was a moment's silence. The major presently sauntered over and tried the door leading to the dining-room.

"Here is the key, if you want to go in there," said Hearn. "I have kept all the rooms locked since Blauvelt left, except this one and my bedroom up-stairs. The back door is locked too. Jake always comes in the front way. I don't suppose any one has come through the kitchen since the day the captain's family left."

"*Didn't Welsh* have to come here for his traps?" asked Lane.

"Yes; but he was under guard at the time,—had a sentinel over him,—and both Jake and I were here. He took nothing out of this house but his own personal belongings, and never entered this room at all that day. I couldn't help it, but after seeing him with Schönberg to-day the first explanation of my loss that occurred to me a moment ago was—Welsh. Yet how could he have been the man?"

There was another moment of silence. Lane stood thoughtfully examining the lock of the desk, then strolled into the hall and tried the key of the front door. As he stood there under the swinging lamp, the clink of an infantry sword was heard at the gate, and the voice of Captain Brodie:

"What are you youngsters doing at this hour of the peaceful night? Come out here and worship nature and visit sentries for me. Ah! beg your pardon, Lane: I thought it must be some of the boys."

"Major Kenyon and I have been keeping Hearn awake," was the answer. "We were just going."

"Hello, Brodie," quoth the major, as he, too, came forth. "Have you been to see how Brent is?"

"Delirious, I'm told. Only the doctor and the steward are with him. I was just waiting for twelve o'clock to go down and stir up the sentries. There ought to be none but cavalry officers of the day at this post, by Jove, so that they could ride around among these outside sentries. It's too far for a Christian to walk twice in twenty-four hours. Thank God, there's the call now."

At the first words from the lips of the sentry at the guard-house the lamps at the two western gates were promptly extinguished, and then the forms of two men could be discerned flitting from post to post, extinguishing each lamp in turn. Soon the entire quadrangle was wrapped in total darkness, and the silent stars gleamed all the more brilliantly in the unclouded sky. Far over to the westward the reflection of the electric lights, a pallid, sickly glare upon the heavens, suddenly faded into nothingness.

"That's the first time the town clock and ours have been so close together since my coming to the garrison. Where did we get this custom of dousing the glim at midnight?" asked Lane.

"The —th started that when they were here. Got it from town, perhaps. Listen a moment," answered Brodie. "I want to hear the sentries down towards the bridge."

Faint and far, *though borne* on the wings of the soft night-wind,

the call of No. 7 had just sounded. It was now the turn of the farthest sentry, No. 8, whose post was down the winding road at the haystacks and wood-yard. A rich, musical Irish voice, softened by distance, began its soldier troll:

"N-umber Eight.—Tw-el-ve o'clock,—and a-a-all's—— *Who goes there? Halt! Halt!* Corp'l the gu-a-ard—Number Eight!" Bang!

Hearn was the first of the four officers to reach the southwest gate. He could hear the footfalls of the officer of the guard running rapidly down the road past the stables, and without hesitation followed full tilt. The guard was hurriedly turning out and forming. It was the sergeant who faced it to the front and made the customary report to Captain Brodie, as the officer of the day came panting to the spot:

"Sir, the guard is present and the prisoners secure."

An audible snicker in the prison-room followed these words. A corporal file-closer stepped back into the guard-room and gruffly ordered silence among the prisoners, which only evoked more tittering and whispering. A sudden thought occurred to the officer of the day.

"Bring your lantern here," he said, as he strode through the guard-room into the narrow passage beyond. On one side was the prison-room whence the sound proceeded; on the other were the cells.

"Open these doors," he ordered.

"There's only one cell occupied, sir; the third."

"Open that, then."

The heavy door creaked on its hinges. A gust of cool night-air blew through the cell. The window was wide open. The iron slats were sawed away. The bird had flown. Private Goss, the assailant of Corporal Brent, was gone.

VII.

In the soft, June-like weather of that memorable week at Ryan the ladies spent but little of their waking moments in-doors, and even the broad verandas of the colonel's quarters on the north side were no more popular or populous than those of Captain Lane at the southwest corner. Mrs. Lane and Miss Marshall attributed this to the fact that the sun on its westward way passed behind their cosey home and left the front piazza cool and shaded, whereas even the canvas hangings in front of the Morrises' could not quite shut out the glare. But Mrs. *Morris laughingly* declared that since their coming into the society of

Fort Ryan she had become "a decided back number." Whether the theory of the colonel's wife were true or not, it must be said to her credit that she accepted the situation with charming grace, and was quite as frequent a visitor at the Lanes' as many of the younger women. Her own guests had departed, leaving her somewhat lonely, she said; and, while she thought it by no means a proper or conventional thing that she should be so constantly visiting people who so seldom honored her, she could not but have ocular proof at all hours of the day that Mrs. Lane and her fair friend Miss Marshall could not sally forth to make calls except at the price of leaving a number of callers in the lurch. There were other young ladies in garrison, just then,—Miss Wharton, visiting her brother, and Miss McCrea, staying at the Burnhams'. There were several pretty girls in the neighboring town, who frequently came out and spent a few days with the families at the post; and all these, of course, as well as the young married ladies, were the recipients of much attention on the part of the officers, young and old. It is a fact well understood in army circles that few officers are too old to tender such attentions, and no woman too old to receive them.

And Mrs. Lane was rejoicing in the success of her projects for the benefit of Georgia Marshall. Her friend was a pronounced success from the day of her arrival; and yet it was somewhat difficult to say why. She was not a beauty, despite her lovely eyes; she had none of those flattering, soothing, half-caressing ways some women use with such telling effect on almost every man they seek to impress. She was not chatty. She was anything but confidential. She was rather silent, and decidedly reserved, yet a most attentive listener withal; and then she had the courage of her opinions. Her prompt and prominent part in the little drama enacted the night of her arrival had made her famous in the garrison; her frank, unaffected, but gracious ways had done much to make her popular. The statement that she was an orphan and poor, combined with the fact, which the other women so speedily determined, that she was not pretty, had removed her, presumably, from the range of jealousy. The other girls found her very entertaining, since she let them do much of the talking, and were willing to accord to her a certain quiet style of her own. The men were glad to be civil to any friend of Mrs. Lane's. And yet Georgia Marshall had not been here a week before, as Mabel confidently predicted, she was having an abundance *tête-à-têtes* of her own.

It was the *third morning* after the escape of the prisoner Gross,

and for forty-eight hours nothing else had been talked of among the soldiers, and nothing had excited so much comment among the families at the post. Up to this moment not a trace had been found. The two iron slats in front of his window had been cut through swiftly and noiselessly from within with watch-spring saws, and the tallow and iron-filings lay about the stony window-sill. He had been thoroughly searched before being put in that cell, and it was absolutely certain that neither files nor tallow were then in his possession. The guard swore that no man had had access to him afterwards. A wire netting prevented anything from being thrown to him from the outside, and this had been forced upward and outward after the bars were cut. The sergeant of the guard was sure that no man had touched or even spoken to him, except when he, himself, had seen his dinner and supper handed in. There could have been no collusion on the part of the sentries, for the men on No. 1 all through the day and night were of the infantry, and warm friends of Brent, who would have lost no chance of putting a bullet through the supposed assailant in the event of his attempting to escape. The blacksmith said it would take several hours —at least five—to file through those two bars, and the man must have worked with the patience of a beaver. It was a drop of only seven feet to the ground without, for the window overlooked the up-hill slope back of the guard-house; and yet, as he probably had to come through head first, that was quite a fall. The prints of his outspread hands were found in the dust-heap, and it looked as though he must have lain there some moments before stealing away.

The sentry far down by the wood-yards, No. 8, stated that just as he was calling off and standing faced to the east so that his voice might carry to the guard-house, he heard a sudden stumble behind him; a man tripped over a log between him and the road, then ran like mad down toward the old station. It was too dark to recognize who it could be. The officer of the guard had stopped to interrogate the sentry on reaching his post, but Mr. Hearn had pushed ahead, and down at the foot of the hill had plainly heard a horse's hoofs and the light rumble of wheels crossing the bridge and going at a spanking trot; yet soldiers returning from pass, reliable men, had neither seen nor heard horse or wagon anywhere on the flats along which lay the road to town. An effort had been made to trail the wheel-tracks from the bridge, but, *though a place* was found among the trees near the old station where a *horse and buggy* had evidently stood for two or three hours, it was im-

possible to determine which way they had gone after crossing the stream, for the farm-wagons coming from every by-road in the morning had totally obliterated the tracks.

Goss's escape while under charges of such grave character was regarded as tantamount to admission of his guilt.

Meantime, Corporal Brent's case seemed to have taken a turn for the better, and, though there was still danger, there was hope. What struck many inquirers was the fact that the doctor seemed ill at ease, and invariably evaded the question, when pressed as to the nature of Brent's delirium. This, of course, simply served to whet public curiosity; and the young soldier became, all unconsciously, an object of greater interest than ever. The ladies of the infantry, who had known him by sight some time, were certain that from the very first he had borne all the outward appearance of a gentleman, and in every word and gesture had "given the world assurance of a man" of birth and breeding. Their sisters of the cavalry, who had but recently reached Fort Ryan, were not slow in accepting their theories. Such things were by no means uncommon in the service; and wouldn't it be delicious, now, to have a romance in the ranks at Ryan? Only fancy! Mrs. Burnham, Mrs. Brodie, and, above all, Mrs. Graves, were quite ready to go to the hospital at any time the doctor would permit and become the nurse of the young corporal; but the medical man almost bluntly declined the services of two of these ladies, and with positive insolence, said the third, had told her she could much better devote her ministrations to her own children. "Just as if I didn't know best what my children needed!" said the offended matron.

And it was about Dr. Ingersoll that Mrs. Graves was discoursing this very morning on Mrs. Lane's piazza, while her own olive-branches were clambering the fences and having a battle royal with the progeny of Mrs. Sergeant Flynn at the other end of the garrison. And, as luck would have it, who should come along the gravel walk but the major and the doctor, arm in arm! at which sight Miss Marshall's expressive eyes, brimming with merriment, sought the half-vexed features of Captain Lane, who had been fidgeting uneasily in his chair during her ladyship's exordium. Like many another excellent soldier, this practised trooper had no weapon with which to silence a woman's tongue.

"You'll find I'm right, Mrs. Lane. See if you don't," proceeded Mrs. Graves, all unconscious of the coming pair. "You found I

wasn't mistaken about Major Kenyon; and they are just as like as two peas in a pod,—both of them."

Then, recalled to the possibilities of the situation by the mirthful gleam in Miss Marshall's eye and the audible chuckles of Mr. Lee, she whirled about and caught sight of the object of her dissertation.

"Oh, it's you they're laughing at, is it?" she hailed. "I was just talking about you."

"Then how could you find the heart to laugh, Mrs. Lane?" said the major, raising his cap with simulated reproach of mien. "Does it amuse you to see fellow-mortals flayed alive? Is it not bad enough that, like Sir Peter Teazle, I am never out of Mrs. Graves's sight but that I know I've left my character behind me? The doctor and I were wondering whether there was a vestige left of the good impression we strove to make upon Miss Marshall."

"I'm sure you ruined all possibility of that three days ago, major, when you showed her what a cynical old party you were. No wonder the young officers in our regiment lose all love for their profession after hearing you talk. If I were Colonel Morris, I wouldn't have you contaminating the lieutenants of the Eleventh the way you were trying it on Mr. Hearn the other day."

"Where is Mr. Hearn, by the way?" asked Mrs. Lane, eager to put an end to such unprofitable controversy. "He hasn't been in here for nearly two days. Come, major,—come, doctor, walk in and sit awhile. We want to hear how Corporal Brent is, too."

"Brent seems easier, Mrs. Lane, thank you," answered the surgeon. "I cannot stop just now; we came over to meet the mail, for the orderly seems to have an unusually big load this morning. Here come the youngsters up from the post-office now."

And, as he spoke, perhaps half a dozen young cavalrymen, still in their riding-boots and spurs, as though they had but just returned from drill, came slowly up the slope. Wharton had an open newspaper which he was reading aloud; the others were hanging about him, evidently listening with absorbed attention, to the neglect of their own letters.

"What's the matter with the boys?" asked Kenyon, whimsically, as they approached. "They look as solemn as owls."

Naturally, all eyes were drawn toward the coming party. Lane, *bending forward*, saw that Hearn's face was pale, even under the coat *of tan and sunburn.* He would have passed them by, simply lifting

s cap, as Wharton half folded the paper when the group filed in rough the main gate, but again Kenyon spoke:

"What makes you look so like a pack of mutes, lads? What's ne wrong? Is Congress sailing into us again?"

"Major Kenyon," said Martin, deliberately, halting in front of the te, "I said some disparaging things about your remarks here the ıer day. I beg your pardon, sir. You were right; I was wrong. Hold on, Hearn: don't go now and brood over this thing. Stay re with the crowd, and we'll take it all together."

Lane had half risen, anxiety deepening in his dark-gray eyes:

"What is it, Hearn? Come in here,—come in, all of you."

And Georgia Marshall, glancing from one face to another, noted the ence and gravity that had fallen on each. Some looked full of sup-essed wrath, others simply perplexed and annoyed. Without a word any one, Hearn stepped in and stood beside her chair.

"You best know your own papers, major: you read this aloud," d Martin.

And Kenyon, looking about in momentary surprise, unfolded the eat pages of the Chicago daily. His eyes gleamed as they caught the avy head-lines at the top of the sheet.

"Hello! hello! what's this?" he said. "Army Brutality. Out-geous Treatment of Private Soldiers. Civilians Insulted and Abused. Thug in Shoulder-Straps. Lieutenant Hearn a Cowardly Bully. ecial Despatch to the *Palladium*. CENTRAL CITY, May 3.—For ars past the citizens of this thriving frontier town have had frequent use for complaint as to the swaggering and insolent bearing of the icers of the army stationed at the neighboring post of Fort Ryan; t of late the feeling has reached fever-heat, due to recent occurrences ıich attracted wide-spread attention. Acting under instructions, your rrespondent reached this city five days ago, and has made a thorough, ıpartial, and exhaustive investigation into the matter; has talked with ıny, if not all, of the prominent citizens; has personally visited the st and conversed with a number of intelligent enlisted men; and, as result of his painstaking observations, he is enabled to send you the llowing account, for the absolute accuracy of every detail of which vouches unreservedly.

"So far as the enlisted men are concerned, the people have no com-aint to make. It is, indeed, the contemplation of their wrongs and fferings that has roused the popular clamor against their aristocratic

and overbearing taskmasters. Just why it is that the instant a young man escapes from that hot-bed of flunkeyism and snobbery, West Point, and dons the straps of a second lieutenant, he should imagine that he owns the earth and that the nations should bow down to him, is something no intelligent mind can understand. But to become convinced that it is so beyond peradventure, one has only to visit this representative army post, garrisoned as it is by large detachments of so-called distinguished regiments; though, from all accounts, the distinction they have earned seems chiefly to be connected with drinking-bouts and gambling-tables.

"On every side it was declared to your correspondent that civilians who ventured out to the fort were treated with contumely and insult; that the officers rudely ordered them off the reservation and forbade them to enter the sacred precincts of the barracks, and even caused their ejection from the public store and saloon, kept at the post by one Stone, who truckles, of course, to his official neighbors and obtains in return the mandate that the soldiers must spend their money with him at swindling prices, and the prohibition against their having any dealings with the reputable merchants in the city. On the other hand, the merchants who have been so unfortunate as to trust the officers are not able to collect their bills at all, and are absolutely forbidden to enter the garrison when they seek to press their claims.

"Here is the brief history of one day's experience. In company with one of the oldest, wealthiest, and most respected business-men of this section, your correspondent drove to Fort Ryan this morning to see for himself how far the facts would justify the allegations, and if a lingering doubt remained it was at once and forever rudely dispelled. A case of particular hardship had been brought to our attention, and we desired to see Trooper Welsh in person. He was on sick-report, excused from drill by reason of the treatment that had been accorded him by the commanding officer of his troop, or we probably could not have seen him at all. Seizing a moment when the officers were away at drill, Mr. S. sent a message asking the young soldier to come out. A fine-looking, intelligent man of about twenty-five years was presented to your correspondent, and briefly and simply told his story. It was enough to make an American's blood boil in his veins to note the emotion and humiliation it seemed to cause him. He came of an excellent family in the East, but, having long desired from patriotic *motives to become* a soldier of the flag, he had against their wishes

enlisted under an assumed name. From the very start his captain had compelled him to work about his house like a common drudge. He had to black boots, build fires, sweep the kitchen, actually do chores for the captain's cook. In vain he begged to be allowed to join his troop and learn his duty as a soldier: he was sternly refused. It made his own comrades among the soldiers look down upon him, and when he could find time to visit them at the barracks the sergeants abused him like a thief. But the man who particularly hounded him was Second Lieutenant Hearn, a young martinet fresh from West Point, who never lost a chance of cursing him for errors on drill or mistakes made afterward. The captain had taught him that when at work for him he must not quit it to jump up and salute every lieutenant who happened along; and just because he remained seated and at work when Lieutenant Hearn passed by, the latter cursed him like a dog, had him thrown into a filthy dungeon, and there he lay until he was tried by court-martial and sentenced by a gang of Hearn's comrades to fine and imprisonment for obeying his captain's orders. Another time, when he was cleaning the captain's horse, the lieutenant's horse, which was next him on the line, kept backing over him, treading on him, and knocking his brushes out of his hand; and because he simply pushed him back and spoke sharply, Lieutenant Hearn rushed in and swore he had a mind to kick him black and blue. 'If he had,' said Welsh,—and the young soldier's eyes blazed with pent-up feeling,—'I could no longer have controlled myself. I would have knocked him down and appealed to the people of America to uphold me.' For this he was again thrust into the vermin-haunted dungeon, and this made him so ill that the surgeon himself had been compelled to interpose in his behalf. 'I would desert and end it all,' said the poor fellow, with tears in his eyes, 'but I have sworn to serve my country, and I shall keep my oath.' When told that the *Palladium* would see him righted, though the heavens fell, his emotion was something that would have melted the stoutest heart.

"But now comes the crowning peak of blackguardism. Warned by some spy, doubtless, of the fact that his victim was telling his story to citizens, Lieutenant Hearn suddenly appeared on the scene, and before our eyes, with vulgar abuse and tyrannical bearing, ordered Private Welsh instantly to leave. In vain the young soldier respectfully pleaded that he had a right to speak with friends who came to see him. In vain he pointed out that he was on no duty at the time. In vain

Mr. S. interposed in behalf of justice and decency. The brutal bully seized the weakened invalid in an iron grasp, dragged him like a dog to the gutter in front, and then, with cuffs and curses, drove him before him into the guard-house. Meantime, Mr. S., who had formerly many friends at the post, hastened into the officers' club-room, hoping to explain the matter and secure justice for the unfortunate fellow. But it was a hapless move. What business had he, a civilian, to intrude uninvited into the mighty presence of half a dozen beardless young satraps in shoulder-straps? He was rudely ordered to leave the premises; and when, in his indignation, he protested against such treatment, Lieutenant Hearn himself came back boiling with rage, calling for his troopers to come and eject these intruders from the garrison. We were actually driven by force off the reservation.

"Your correspondent has, of course, made immediate and respectful representation of these facts to the general commanding the department, and when next he visits the fort will do so with a safeguard that no bully in the uniform of a second lieutenant will dare gainsay. This is but the prelude of further details still more disgraceful to the pampered minions of a too long-suffering public."

For a few moments there was silence. Then the major glanced around his circle of listeners.

"Well, Hearn," said he, as he folded the paper, "somewhere I have heard the expression, 'Didn't I tell you so?' *Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori.* I don't wonder you love your profession."

"Surely they cannot believe such an outrageous tissue of lies," burst out Mrs. Wharton, vehemently. "Surely the moment our side of the story is heard the public will see the difference."

"Our side, my dear madam, is never heard. The newspaper has the public ear. Scandal spreads world-wide; truth never reaches half as far. Hearn has only one recourse,—grin and bear it, and pray God nothing worse may follow."

"What worse can follow, I should like to know?" asked Lee, indignantly.

"What worse? Why, man, you don't suppose a Chicago paper sends an emissary a thousand miles to work up only one scene in a sensation? Look for the next day's issue, and the next. Wait till the letters demanding explanation begin coming in from department, division, and army head-quarters. *Fiat justitia, ruat cœlum*, will be the *Palladium's cry; Parturiunt montes, nascitur ridiculus mus*, the outcome. But all the same, my friends and fellow-citizens, we don't get

hrough this row without the biggest kind of a court-martial.—Ah, he orderly of the commanding officer! Whom does *he* want?"

Not a word was spoken, and every eye was fixed upon the trim igure of the approaching soldier, who entered the gate and, halting espectfully a few yards away from the foot of the steps, saluted:

"The colonel's compliments to the officer of the day, and desires hat Private Welsh, now in the guard-house, be sent to the office immeliately."

"Aha!" said Kenyon, as the soldier turned away. "Already some»ody's been tickling the colonel with a telegram. He's hardly had ime to read the papers. Now he will hear Welsh's story; and when Welsh has sufficiently blackened the character of his commanding »fficer, Hearn will be afforded his chance.—Hearn, my boy, my hearty ympathies are with you. By all means go on and prosper in your proession, and learn to love it as I do.—Martin, you and he have a moment to spare, come over to my quarters with me: I want to talk this hing over with you.—Good-afternoon, Mrs. Lane. Good-afternoon, Mrs. Graves. A sudden thought occurs to me. What was it Cam»ronne is reported to have said at Waterloo?—'The Guard dies, but ıever surrenders.' Here's a more modern epigram for you: The Press ies, but never retracts."

VIII.

With all his soldierly qualifications, Colonel Morris, like most of ıis sex, had certain defects of character. He was a tireless worker as . regimental commander, and had done a great deal to bring up the 'tone" of the Eleventh, which had suffered vastly during the reign of »ld Riggs, his predecessor. He had won a good name as a young »fficer in the war days, and had borne himself well in the more trying ınd hazardous campaigns of the far frontier. But Morris, both during he war and since, had seen staff duty that had brought him into social ınd political circles in Washington; had learned there the lesson that ın ounce of influence is worth a pound of pure record; that in most matters affecting army legislation it was the men who were the farthest away from the army whose opinions Congress sought; that in all appointments to the staff departments personal and professional excellence ıight plead in vain unless backed by Senators by the score; and that vhile judicious use of the gifts that God had put in his way in the

shape of the public press might result in the gradual rearing of a monument of popular esteem, a single unguarded word or petulant expression would tumble the whole fabric about his ears. He had seen the highest names in legislative, financial, and social circles dragged in the dust; the head of the House of Representatives dethroned; a Wall Street monarch execrated; a gallant soldier, maimed in battle, ridiculed. In combined and resistless assault the press had overwhelmed the record of years. Morris had faced death in a dozen fields without a flinch, but he trembled in the presence of a reporter.

Nervous, irritable, and unstrung, he called his officers about him on the following day. Guard-mounting was still in progress; the band was playing sweetly on the grassy parade; the ringing voice of the soldierly young adjutant swung the column around in its jaunty march in review. One after another the troop and company officers came quietly in, bade their flushed commander a courteous good-morning, and took their seats. He was pacing the floor, tugging at his moustache, another telegram in his hand.

"Where's Dr. Ingersoll?" he asked, suddenly stopping in his walk.

"Here, colonel," said the post surgeon, stepping within the office from the brick pavement outside. "I was waiting a moment to see the steward, to give some directions as to Brent's case."

"Ah, yes. He's better, I believe. Now, I see you have marked Welsh for duty, and the man tells me he couldn't sleep all night because of pains and chills."

"Welsh is as well as I am, Colonel Morris, or if ill has only himself to blame. He knows as well as I do that he has no business to go to the store and drink when under treatment and taking medicine. It is my firm conviction, sir, that that man is simply trying to shirk."

"Well, well, Dr. Ingersoll, it is a matter in which we cannot be too careful. You haven't the faintest conception, sir, to what this most unfortunate affair may lead. It is infinitely better that we should be imposed upon by a shirk than that the public should get to look upon us as this man's persecutors. The *Palladium* that came yesterday was bad enough, in all conscience, but here's another telegram from department head-quarters demanding immediate investigation and report upon the allegations contained in the second day's issue of the series. How *many are there to* be, in heaven's name?—Mr. Hearn, have you sub-

mitted your explanation?" said the colonel, turning abruptly upon the young lieutenant, who was sitting in pained silence by Captain Lane.

"It is in the hands of the adjutant, sir," answered Hearn, rising.

"I have not seen it,—I have not seen it. I hope you have been full and explicit, Mr. Hearn."

The lieutenant's pale face flushed with sudden sense of indignation:

"I have never yet been accused of any attempt at concealment of my actions, Colonel Morris. Gentlemen present who have known me nearly six years will tell you that."

"I'm not accusing you of anything, Mr. Hearn. Pray keep your temper, sir. But you do not seem to appreciate in the least the very trying and unpleasant position in which you have, however unwittingly, placed every officer at this post, especially me, on whom the burden of responsibility must fall. If I had known four days ago that you had used violence—or at least force—in ejecting that soldier from the barroom, I should certainly have discountenanced his further punishment. This sort of thing cannot be tolerated, Mr. Hearn.—And, gentlemen, I say it to you one and all, this sort of thing cannot be allowed. It creates a wrong impression among the people. It gives the press an opportunity to criticise our methods of discipline. It makes a martyr of the man in the eyes of the public, and we can't stand it. I have felt compelled to release him from confinement and to direct the quashing of the charges against him."

There was a moment of dead silence. Hearn was struggling to control himself and to protest that he had used neither violence nor any force worth speaking of. But Captain Brodie took the floor:

"I must ask your pardon, Colonel Morris, but I was witness to that transaction from beginning to end, and I myself ordered Welsh taken to the guard-house. It was after that, not before, that force was used. Welsh cursed and resisted the corporal of the guard——"

"Never mind, Captain Brodie: what seems to have infuriated the man, and what has given rise to all this uproar of the press, is the fact that Mr. Hearn, as they say, dragged him out. Of course that may be exaggerated."

"It's a d——d lie," muttered old Kenyon, under his breath. "But all the more it goes."

"I do not wish to be unjust to Mr. Hearn in this matter," continued the colonel. "But I cannot too strongly deplore the consequences of his—of his action. And then in threatening to expel

civilians from the garrison! What earthly right had you, Mr. Hearn, to arrogate to yourself the faculties of commanding officer? *I* am the only man to say who shall and who shall not be kept on or off the reservation. And now, of all men on earth that you young gentlemen should have been particularly careful not to antagonize, it turns out that one of them is a representative of the press."

And, in the full realization of a circumstance so calamitous, the colonel sank into his chair. Hearn would have explained that he had made no personal threats, but Lane's restraining hand was laid on his knee.

"Patience, lad!" he whispered. "Say nothing now. It will all come right in the end."

"I'm sure I took the utmost pains to be civil to the a—gentlemen," drawled Martin, with his innocent eyes on the vacancy of the opposite walls. "I implored Stone not to eject them. I had to beg off drinking with the—a-Israelitish party because I had to shoot. Of course, colonel, if I had known that the other gentleman was so highly connected, there's no saying to what length I wouldn't have gone to attain the elevation they had already reached,—one of them at least. A dozen drinks, I think, might have done it."

"This is no occasion for the exercise of your sarcastic powers, Mr. Martin," said the colonel, severely. "It is to be hoped your civility was less transparent a sham than your present remarks."

"Pardon me, colonel," interposed Lieutenant Lee, whose seat was near the window. "Here comes the gentleman himself."

Surely enough, a buggy drew up in front of the office, a bulky form slowly descended, and, with much deliberation of manner, Mr. Abrams, of Chicago, looked about him, then proceeded to tie his horse to a young maple at the edge of the walk. The orderly sprang forward:

"Beg pardon, sir, but it's against orders to tie horses to the trees. The horse-posts are across the road."

"Against whose orders?" said the gentleman from Chicago, with slow and impressive movement, turning upon the trim soldier.

"The colonel's orders, sir. Even the officers can't leave their horses in front of head-quarters, sir."

"My God! Here! this will never do!" fidgeted the colonel, springing to his feet. "Mr. Adjutant, send a man out here."

"*Shall I take* care of the gentleman's horse?" said Martin, with

grave humility of mien, rising slowly to his feet, as the colonel strode to the door. But Morris was too hurried to hear him, or even to rebuke the titter with which the words were greeted. By this time, paying no attention to the orderly, the representative of the *Palladium* had reached the door-way and was brought face to face with the post commander:

"Colonel Morris, I presume. I am the bearer of an order to you from department head-quarters."

"Colonel Morris, sir, at your service," replied the post commander, with much suavity. "A letter, I presume. Walk in, Mr.—Mr.—— Take a chair, sir."

Several of the officers nearest the door had risen promptly, as though in readiness to receive with due honors the colonel's guest. Others slowly followed their example. Some remained seated and continued a low-toned chat. All gradually resumed their seats, and, while some with evident curiosity studied the appearance of the stranger, Brodie and Lee looked at him with eyes that plainly spoke their resentment, while Hearn's hands were clinched and his lips compressed. No word was spoken to the new arrival, however. He, with entire indifference of manner as to all the rest, fixed his gaze upon the commanding officer, who rapidly read. The note was short and to the point. Morris had reason to be thankful for his diplomatic training.

"I am greatly pleased to give you welcome, Mr. Abrams," he said, extending his hand with much apparent cordiality of manner. "This, while by no means necessary, of course adds to the readiness with which we open our doors to you. Had I known you were here and desirous of visiting the post for any purpose in the interests of your paper, I should have found means to welcome you before, and am only sorry you did not make your presence known to me."

Major Kenyon had risen as the colonel was speaking, and now in low tone and with much respect of manner accosted him:

"By your leave, colonel, if there be nothing further in the way of business, may I request your permission to retire?"

"Certainly, Major Kenyon.—And, gentlemen, there were some matters to which I desired to call your attention, but it is so near time for 'boots and saddles,' we will defer the matter until to-morrow. I will not detain you further."

There were one or two among the score of officers present who de-

sired to see the colonel on some routine matters; these contented themselves with going over to the adjutant's desk, as he entered, and whispering their requests to him; the others promptly took their leave and sauntered out into the sunshine. Mr. Abrams noted the occurrence with a quiet but suggestive smile.

For a moment no one among the little group seemed to find anything to say. It was Mr. Lee who gave the first expression to personal opinion. He burst out into a fit of laughter.

"I'm blessed if I can see anything to laugh about in this affair, Mr. Lee," said the major, whose face was a shade moodier than ever. "If anything was needed to confirm what I have hitherto said on the subject, here you have it. Perhaps it pleases you to see a comrade vilified by the press and then bulldozed by his commanding officer, who well knows the paper lied, but daren't stand up for one of his subalterns. And then to think of the fellow's impudence, announcing himself as the bearer of an order from head-quarters! If I had been in command I should have told him orders were never sent by the hand of civilians."

"Sail into the paper, if you like, Major Kenyon, but leave the *colonel* alone; that's purely our business," was the prompt reply.—"Captain Lane, may I ask if the colonel has requested an invitation to dinner to-night for his friend Mr. Abrams, of Chicago? I understand that Mrs. Morris and the chief are among your guests."

"He hasn't yet, Lee, and, if he should, the quartermaster will have to knock down a partition, for my dining-room can only hold twelve or fourteen by severe squeezing."

"Captain," said Hearn, as they walked away, "I'm going to ask you to excuse me to-night. I would only be a cloud at your feast, and after what has passed I don't feel as though I could sit at dinner with the colonel."

"Hearn, my boy, you must come. We are not going to let you crawl into a corner now and brood over this. It is the very time when we want to stand by you and show how much we hold you in esteem."

"Yes," was the bitter reply, "yes, my colonel has given a glorious exhibition of what constitutes *esprit de corps* in the Eleventh. No, captain, I would do anything for you or Mrs. Lane, but I can think, speak, dream, of nothing now but the wrong that has been done me, and I would only be a drag. You will excuse me, won't you?"

"*Come in,* come into the house, Hearn," answered Lane, as they

reached the gate. "Come in and talk it over with Mrs. Lane and Miss Marshall; they will do you good. They are both full of sympathy. Come; it's quarter of an hour before drill."

But Hearn shook his head and drew away.

"I cannot," he said; "I must go; there's my home letter yet unwritten."

And so, with Lane's anxious eyes following him, he strode rapidly away to his quarters. There Jim Wallace joined him at the gate.

Three hours later, however, with drill over and the mail in, the question of dinner became of minor importance. Marked copies of the *Palladium* had been received by several officers, and the faces of the group on Captain Lane's piazza were studies.

"Did the orderly take one to him, do you know?" asked Mr. Lee, with a world of pent-up indignation in his tone.

"One!" answered the major; "one! the insult wouldn't be complete without it. I think there were a dozen papers, marked copies, in his name."

"Has no one gone to see him?" asked Mrs. Lane, her sweet face full of sorrow.

"The captain was there when the mail came; so was Mr. Wallace," answered Miss Marshall, in low tones. "He seemed to anticipate something of the kind."

"This will have a tendency to make Hearn rather homesick, I fancy," drawled Martin, after a solemn pause. "I never quite appreciated the benefit of Southern institutions before."

"Sick, I admit,—sick at heart, sick of his cherished profession, perhaps; but why homesick, Martin?" queried the major.

"Oh, only because down South they shoot a man who publishes an outrageous slander like that, and the jury brings in a verdict of justifiable homicide."

IX.

The afternoon was lovely and full of sunshine. Thanks to the startling and sensational disclosures in the *Palladium*, the post had become an object of unusual interest to the surrounding populace, and, as the hour for dress-parade approached, vehicles of every description came streaming across the bridge, and before the trumpet sounded "first call" the road in front of the officers' quarters was well filled with carriages, buggies, carry-alls, and light wagons, while some enter-

prising livery-stable-keeper had fitted up a few open stages and placarded them with inscriptions setting forth that "To the Fort and back only a quarter" was a luxury now within the reach of everybody.

The populace was beginning to gather as the cavalry officers came sauntering back from the stables, and Mr. Abrams, of Chicago, again alighted from his buggy with an air that fully conveyed his appreciation of the fact that he was the popular hero of the moment,—the daring journalist who had bearded the lion in his den, had publicly denounced the brutality of these arrogant wearers of straps and swords, and had even brought to the bar of justice one of their number. There was the utmost curiosity to see the representative of the *Palladium*, and that eminent journalist, true to his principles of conforming with the views and wishes of the public, graciously accorded every opportunity. It was in passing this gentleman, surrounded by a gaping party of Central citizens, that the colonel somewhat ostentatiously called out, "Orderly, give my compliments to the adjutant, and say that, in view of the presence of so many gentlemen and ladies from town, I desire him to have the band ordered out at once," and went on his way amidst such audible evidences of popular approval as, "Ah! that's business!" "Ain't he a Jim Dandy?" "That's my candidate for Brigadier!" "He ain't no stuck-up second lieutenant!" And the poor devils of bandsmen, just seating themselves at their supper of hot potato-stew and coffee, were compelled to drop the savory bowls, and hastily button their full uniforms over their anything-but-full stomachs and march forth upon the parade to entertain the populace until the rest of the show was ready. If but now an apoplectic stroke were to create a vacancy among the brigadiers, Morris's star might indeed be in the ascendant.

It had been the custom of the ladies at Captain Lane's to appear on the piazza about the time that the officers came up from evening stables, and, reinforced by the Whartons, next door, and sometimes by other fair ones, to serve a fragrant cup of tea to such of their regimental friends as had time to drop in. To-day, too, the cosey little tables had been set upon the veranda, but the close proximity of the southwest gate, through which all the teams came driving in, and the rude stares of the occupants of the various vehicles, speedily drove the ladies away; and Sam Ling, the Chinaman, an old retainer of Lane's, *was busily* carrying the pretty china within-doors again and lamenting in *voluble "pidgin"* the coating of dust which had been received, when

he captain walked by, with Hearn at his side. In vain Mrs. Lane alled to him from the door-way to bring in any one who would come. He shook his head and walked on, talking gravely and earnestly with is younger friend. Miss Marshall, standing at the window, noted he inexpressible sadness and distress in Hearn's once buoyant, hand-ome face. He had grown years older in one day, she thought; all he color had fled from his sun-tanned cheeks, and the light from his rave blue eyes; yet there was a gleam in them, as he bent his head to alk with his friend the captain, that spoke of the smouldering fire vithin. She had thought him grossly wronged in the occurrences of he previous day, but it was the coming of the *Palladium* on the noon rain that capped the climax. Omitting all the ingenious and alluring ead-lines, condensing the sensational details in which the correspond-nt had worked up the case, Lieutenant Hearn stood accused before the vhole United States of having forcibly ejected from the reservation a ighly-respectable business-man who had vainly importuned him to ay the sum he for years had owed the estate of the former post trader, 'most of it borrowed money to help him out of gambling scrapes," nd had at last ventured to press his claim in person, only to be met vith outrage and insult. There could be no doubt of the truth, said he correspondent: the books were open to the whole world, if need be, nd the sum involved exceeded five hundred dollars.

Georgia Marshall, gazing at the pair from the lace-draped window, lasped her shapely white hands in deep perplexity. The slander, the candal, the wrong, was spread world-wide; a refutation could never vertake it, even with the proofs of utter innocence at hand, and where vere they?

It was some comfort at least that he should look up, and, as though n search of one friendly face, search the window with his sad blue yes. He should feel that, no matter what the press might say and he Jews might swear to, more than one among his friends believed in im through thick and thin. Her dark eyes were full of sorrow and ympathy, and yet flashing with scorn of his defamer. And it was his picture of her face, framed by those shimmering curtains and by he trailing, twining tendrils of smilax that hung thickly about the 'indow, that suddenly met his troubled gaze, and that he carried in is memory day and night long, long after.

Half an hour later the orderly came hurrying to Captain Lane's uarters with a note, and then ran on down to the stables.

"This will settle the question for you, Mabel," said Lane, who was getting into parade uniform. "Colonel Lawler comes on the sunset train, and Colonel Morris writes to know whether we cannot excuse him, or whether, perchance, there should be room for one more."

"Oh, Fred, and we've got to say yes, for Mr. Hearn won't come," answered Mrs. Mabel, with grief in her eyes. "We've got to say, 'Bring him by all means;' and yet how I hate to have our pretty dinner spoilt! If the train could only be late!"

"That would spoil it still more, Mabel, for then your—— Oh!" said the captain, suddenly recollecting himself, and turning back to his particular little shaving-mirror, before which he began busily arranging the loop of his gold helmet cord.

"For then?" exclaimed pretty Mrs. Lane, speeding across the space between her toilet-table and her liege-lord's shaving-corner, and laying her white hands upon his shoulder-knots and gazing up into his half-averted face with sparkling eyes,—"For then, you dear old—— You haven't sent East for flowers?"

"Perhaps it was some other fellow, then," said the captain, dubiously.

"Oh, Fred, you darling! I hadn't hoped for anything half so lovely. Will they be here on this train, really? That's why you didn't want dinner served until so late, was it? Georgia and I were saying, just now, if we only had a few flowers the table would be perfect. I must run and tell her." And impulsively she raised her soft lips to his face and kissed him enthusiastically. "You are so thoughtful, Fred!"

"Very," he responded, with much gravity of mien. "And that's what prompted me to suggest to your ladyship the propriety of throwing a wrapper over those snowy shoulders. The orderly has left the hall door open, and all Central City seems out here to-night. There goes the 'assembly,' and your train should be here in fifteen minutes. I suppose I can tell the colonel as he drives past on the way down to meet him?"

Ordinarily the announcement of the advent of some such high functionary as the judge-advocate of the division would have been quite sufficient to induce the colonel to turn over the command at parade to Major Kenyon and to go forthwith to meet the coming man. But here was the *élite* of Central City, as well as a strong delegation of the masses, gathered to see the garrison, and Morris particularly prided himself upon the soldierly grace and style with which he presided at

stately ceremony of the military day. If he were to fail to
t the head of his troops, if all that line of officers were to
the front and salute Major Kenyon instead of him, people
ally get the idea that it was the infantry field-officer who was
commander, not himself. No. In all the yellow radiance of
lry plumage Morris strode forth from his veranda and stood
in the rays of the westering sun. His orderly hastened
the groups on the gravelled road in front, and, halting, raised
in picturesque salute, the eyes of Central City looking on:
e colonel's messages are delivered, and the carriage will be at
n."

y well, Brooks. Now you yourself go down and be on the
for Colonel Lawler, a tall, sandy-haired, sandy-bearded man,
ender, nearly sixty years of age; report to him, and get his
into the wagonette and bring him here to my quarters, and
I would have met him, but was detained at parade."

the orderly saluted, then faced about and strode away through
n of curious eyes which followed him a moment, then turned
e upon the gorgeous and gleaming proportions of the warrior
n his white leather gloves and buttoning them at the wrist
h deliberation. Mrs. Morris being in her own room arraying
r the Lane dinner-party, and the veranda being vacant, he
d to his adjutant, who came along the pathway at the moment,
f floating yellow plume and brilliant aiguillette, and after a
conversation with his chief that young gentleman made his
here a couple of town carriages were drawn up along the
e parade and presented the colonel's compliments to the occu-
e ladies of the postmaster's and leading banker's households,
them to bring their friends and come and sit on his piazza.
ams, of Chicago, who was at the moment the centre of a knot
young and old, quitted their society, and, with his customary
ion, sauntered over, opened the colonel's gate, and with careless
manner accosted that official, "Fine evening, colonel," and
ered himself into the nearest chair just as the officer, with a
flushed unmistakably, excused himself, passed him by, and
down the steps to greet the entering ladies, while the adjutant,
on to where his sergeant-major was awaiting him at the
he greensward, signalled the band, and the stirring notes of
t's call," *followed* by the burst of martial strains in swing-

ing six-eight time, heralded the coming of the troops of the whole command.

Company after company, the cavalry from the west, the infantry from the east end of the quadrangle came marching forth upon the level green carpet, seemingly intermingling in confusion as they neared the centre, yet unerringly and unhesitatingly marching onward, until presently, with the solid blue-and-white battalion in the centre, and with the yellow-plumed helmets of the cavalry parading afoot on both flanks, the long statuesque line stretched nearly half-way across the longest axis of the quadrangle. Company after company the white-gloved hands clasped in front of each man as its commander ordered, "Parade rest," and Colonel Morris himself, who had with much deliberate dignity of manner marched out in front of the centre, now stood in solitary state with folded arms and glanced quickly along the motionless line, while back of him some thirty yards, all along the edge of the parade, in buggies, carry-alls, 'busses, in long sombre rank afoot, Central City looked admiringly on. For a moment the main interest seemed to centre on Lieutenant Hearn, and fingers could be seen pointed, and voices heard announcing, "That's him," as he stood, tall and erect, in front of the troop he was commanding in old Blauvelt's absence.

With flourish of trumpets and three resounding ruffles the band swept out from the right front, and then all eyes were suddenly greeted by an unaccustomed sight. On the troops, long schooled in military etiquette, the effect was not at the time apparent,—neither by word nor sign was there indication that anything unusual had occurred; but in the populace, long accustomed to individual visits to the fort and to observation of its military requirements, "Keep off the grass" and by no means intrude upon the space reserved for military exercises, the sensation was immediate. Elbowing his way through the crowd standing at the edge of the parade-ground, with cigar tip-tilted in his mouth, his light spring overcoat thrown back, with the same cool deliberation that characterized all his movements the representative of the *Palladium* sauntered forth upon the sacred precincts, and, never hesitating until he had almost reached the commanding officer, presently came to a species of "parade rest" of his own, half sitting on the backs of his hands, which were supported on the knob of his massive cane, and there coolly surveyed the proceedings from the very spot

reserved for the adjutant, one yard to the rear and three to the left of the commanding officer.

Some of the soldiers in ranks, unable to repress their merriment at the sight of so unusual a breach of etiquette, could not refrain from tittering. The voices of the file-closers could almost be heard in stern, low-toned reproach: "Stop that laughing, Murphy!" "Quiet, there, Duffy!" Morris himself could see that something unusual was going on, but, totally unconscious that his own official precincts were the scene of the solecism, never changed his position, but stood there statuesque, soldierly, and precise, all unconscious of his self-appointed staff-officer slouching behind him. As for Mr. Abrams, happy in the conviction that the people could not but look on and envy the proud prominence of the representative of the press, he appeared to have no other care than that of the criticism due the public of the martial exercises now taking place. That it was probably the colonel's intention to make a speech of some kind to his men, Mr. Abrams did not doubt, and that the *Palladium* should have every word of it he fully intended.

The band by this time was hammering half-way down the line, and the officer of the day, coming suddenly in the northwest gate from a visit to the guard, became aware that something was exciting the merriment of the few men on the verandas of the cavalry quarters, and then caught sight of this strange figure out on the parade. He looked hurriedly about in search of the colonel's orderly, but Brooks, as we have seen, had already gone on his mission to the station. Not a soul was there to whom he could intrust the duty, yet he knew he could not allow such a breach of military propriety to occur right under his eyes. There seemed no help for it; he had to go himself; and, by no means liking his duty, Captain Cross, of the infantry, hastened out on the parade, and with the eyes of both lines upon him, though the heads of the troops remained scrupulously fixed to the front, he stepped up to Mr. Abrams, tapped him on the shoulder, and civilly said,—

"I beg your pardon, sir, but no one is allowed on the parade-ground. I shall have to trouble you to fall back to the road-way."

Mr. Abrams looked angrily around. What! Be compelled to quit his position?—to fall back in humiliation before all those people and meekly take his station among them, and actually to have to confess that, after all, a newspaper man wasn't the monarch of all he surveyed? Never!

"I'm here in the interests of the journal I represent, and I have full authority from the commanding general to inspect anything at this post," was his instant answer, accompanied by a shrug of his shoulders and an ugly scowl.

"I cannot help that," was Cross's cool yet civil reply. "You can see just as well from the edge of the parade, and here you will be in the way."

"I can't see it clear back there, and I mean to stay where I can see and hear. If there's anything I don't understand, I wish to be where Colonel Morris can explain."

Thanks to the banging of the band, all this was inaudible to the colonel, who remained in blissful ignorance of the colloquy taking place so near him.

"You cannot stay here, sir," was the firm, low-toned answer. "I will take pains to explain everything to you after you retire some twenty yards, but I trust you will not make it necessary for me to be more imperative. Come, sir."

And so, with the worst possible grace, Mr. Abrams had to give ground, and, accompanied by the officer of the day, fall back to the general throng. To cover his mortification as much as possible, Cross, in a smiling and courteous manner, went on to explain the purpose and details of the parade. But Abrams only turned angrily away. Twice he essayed to stop and face about, but Cross was getting his blood up by this time, and determinedly marched along to the very edge of the tittering line of towns-people, and there, raising his cap, said, with the utmost civility,—

"And now, sir, if I can be of the faintest assistance in making this ceremony clear to you, command me. You will observe that the adjutant is coming out to occupy the very position you were in."

But Mr. Abrams was in the sulks, as was to be expected, and still more wrathfully turned his back, refusing to listen, so that Cross promptly left him to his own devices. The representative of the *Palladium* had sense enough not to attempt to resume his place, but he had lost interest in the performance simultaneously with his own loss of prestige among the crowd, and so, after a moment's wavering, he turned about, and shouldered his sullen way toward his buggy, only stopping long enough to inquire of a civilian the name of the *officer.*

"Cross, eh? Captain Cross. Sure of that, are you? All right; I'll fix him," he growled between his set teeth as he strode away.

When a few moments later the long line of officers halted in front of the colonel and raised their hands in simultaneous salute, he responded with something less than his customary graceful deliberation, and inquired,—

"What on earth was going on there, that there was so much giggling in ranks? It was mainly in front of you, Mr. Martin. Have you been attempting any witticisms, sir?"

"Not that I can now recall, colonel," responded Martin, with his usual drawl. "Possibly the appearance of our Chicago friend in the *rôle* of adjutant was what prompted their merriment. If you invited him to accompany you, I trust you will excuse it."

"Whom do you mean, and what do you mean?"

"Why, Mr. Abrams took post on your left and rear, sir, until Cross invited him elsewhere. I'm sorry for Cross: he has a wife and family, and yonder goes the gentleman, bound for the telegraph-office, no doubt. What won't the *Palladium* say now?"

"You don't mean he was right here by me during parade?" said Morris, growing very red.

"Certainly, sir," spoke Captain Brodie. "You could have smelt his cigar if the wind hadn't been blowing from the stables."

But the appearance of the wagonette whirling into garrison with the tall form of Colonel Lawler, a dust-colored figure from the crown of his felt hat down to his very boots, put an end to further remarks. Morris hastened to meet his guest, merely nodding response to Lane's courteous invitation to bring him to dinner.

X.

Captain Lane's quarters, as has been said, were charmingly furnished, ınd adorned with attractive pictures and bric-à-brac. The dining-room vas small, as dining-rooms generally are in army garrisons, but by dint ıf moving out the stove which until now had cumbered one corner, and hen crowding the sideboard into its place, sufficient room had been ained to admit of extending the table diagonally and seating fourteen eople thereat. And now, with the curtains drawn, but the soft evenıg breeze playing through the open casement and the broad hallray, in the soft yet brilliant light of dozens of wax candles set in

sconces on the walls or in heavy candelabra on the damask-covered board, a merry party had gathered for one of the "lovely dinners" for which Mrs. Lane was already famous. Three of the infantry captains were present, with their wives. Pretty Jeannette McCrea, who was visiting the Burnhams, was escorted in by Dr. Ingersoll, popularly reputed to be an intractable bachelor, yet privately believed to be melting beneath the tenderness of that young lady's sweet blue eyes; and Georgia Marshall found herself sitting *vis-à-vis* with Mrs. Brodie, a somewhat portly matron, who seemed capable of imbibing information through every pore and storing it for further use, and yet at the same time imparting new and startling opinions on all current topics with intensified volubility. Her eyes took in every detail of the tasteful appointments of the table. Her nostrils inhaled the fragrance of the roses and carnations lavished on every hand. Her lips parted to receive the succulent little clam—rare and unaccustomed luxury west of the Missouri, yet easily expressed from St. Louis—and to give utterance at the same instant to liveliest comments upon the unusual feature of that evening's parade. It was not until after soup and the tiny thimbleful of sherry that audible conversation seemed to extend beyond her, and then Miss Marshall, who had been endeavoring to entertain Captain Brodie and distract his mind from contemplation of his better half's undaunted conversational powers, found herself addressed by the gentleman on her right:

"And so you are from Cincinnati, Miss Marshall, and paying your first visit to the West? Now, what do you think of the army?"

"Pardon me, Colonel Lawler, but isn't that a trifle like the query we are said to propound to Englishmen who have just landed?—How do you like America?"

"But I inferred that you had been here long enough to form an opinion."

"To form one vaguely, perhaps, but probably not long enough to subject it to the test of experience."

"And do you never express opinions until assured of their justice? Really, Miss Marshall, I must compliment you on such wisdom and discretion. You should have been a lawyer."

"Yes, colonel?—and that, I understand, is your profession. Now I am indeed complimented."

Colonel Lawler's eyes had been wandering about the table as he *spoke, but now* he turned suddenly and suspiciously upon the girl at

is side. He was a man of singular mental mould. He had been a lerk in the office of his uncle, a prominent lawyer in the distant East; ad had merely a common-school education, and was laboriously read- ıg law, when his patron found himself suddenly called upon to assume esponsible duties at the national capital, and hastened thither, taking is clerk with him. Lawler at that time was nearly thirty-five, and ad not yet been called to the bar. It was the third year of the great ar. His patron soon found that the requirements of his office were uch that a man of far higher attainments would be needed as secretary, nd, being thrifty and unwilling to pay the salary of a clerk out of his wn pocket, he decided on the not unusual expedient of shunting him ff on a paternal government. Lawler had no idea whatever of enter- ng the army as one of the fighting force, but the proposition of his ncle was almost dazzling. He wasn't much of a lawyer, to be sure, ut quite good enough for the purpose, said the old gentleman to him- elf. And so it resulted that the green New-Englander was transferred o a clerkship in the bureau of military justice, and speedily blossomed ut as a major and judge-advocate of volunteers, with station in the city f Washington. The first thing the excellent fellow did, after getting is uniform and sword, was to post off to the Granite State and marry he middle-aged maiden who for ten years had been patiently waiting he day when he could accumulate enough money to buy a little home, nd, with his bride, he returned to honest toil at the department. No nan ever worked harder to master the details of unaccustomed duties, nd no man, probably, ever encountered greater difficulties. But such vas his perseverance that he became a walking glossary of information n army legal affairs. It was not that he ever mastered the niceties of nartial jurisprudence, but he knew the inside history of every case that ame up for trial in the bulky records of the bureau. He could quote he charges and specifications preferred against any and every officer, he findings of the court, the names of the principal witnesses, of the judge-advocate and the members, and little by little the seniors in the ffice had grown so to lean upon his memory and his opinion that he ecame an almost indispensable feature. And so when Peace once more pread her wings over the troubled walls of the Capitol, and the army vas sent home, and a chosen few were retained from the million of olunteers to close up the records and accounts of that vast establish- nent, the bureau announced that it couldn't get along without Major awler, and *Lawler was shrewd* enough to see his way to a life-position.

With the brevet of lieutenant-colonel for faithful and meritorious services during a war in which he had not once heard the whistle of a bullet, he was presently announced as transferred to the permanent establishment and duly commissioned one of the array of officers of the regular army.

At this time his sole acquaintance with the gentlemen with whom his future lot was to be cast was what he had derived from the court-martial proceedings which for three years he had spent ten to twelve hours a day in reviewing; and, knowing them through that medium alone, it became somewhat difficult for him to estimate them through any other when at last he was ordered to duty at a far-Western city as judge-advocate of a division. He had been so many years within the shadow of the War Department that army life in any other shape looked to him as might a strange garret to an exiled cat. When he met an officer for the first time his mind reverted to the records which he had reviewed: this was not the man who led the assault on Bloody Angle at Spottsylvania, who planted the first colors on the heights of Mission Ridge, who made the perilous night ride to Crook after the disaster of the Little Horn, but the officer who preferred the charges against Colonel Blank, or who was tried for duplicating pay-accounts at Nashville, or who was the unwilling witness in the case of old Barry at Fort Fetterman. To his pragmatical mind every soldier was a past or prospective figurant before a court-martial, and long contemplation of innumerable counts in the shape of specifications had so charged his mind with distrust of his fellow-men that, whatsoever might be his rank or record, no officer stood so high as to be above suspicion, none so impregnable that, judiciously handled, a court could not down him. "I consider it my bounden duty," he had once said, "to convict an officer if I possibly can." And while in his regard an acquittal might temporarily and partially vindicate the party accused, it must forever blight the fair fame of the judge-advocate who tried the case.

Some years of rubbing had so far modified his original views as to teach him that until charges were actually preferred it was not well to look upon any of his new associates as actually and absolutely attainted. But, once that formality had been accomplished, *primâ facie* evidence of guilt was firmly established, and only with reluctance and inward, if not active, rebellion could he bring himself to accept a verdict otherwise. *Proceedings* of courts which convicted he skimmed through *with lenient eye*; there could be no error there. But when, as was

is invariable custom, he glanced at the findings before beginning the eview, and there discovered the unwelcome words "not guilty," no igilance could exceed that with which he scrutinized every line of the ecord, hoping anywhere to light upon a flaw. Friends in the service t large he neither sought nor made. Secure in his position, abste- ious, frugal, and even niggardly, he had no small vices on which to rip. Life to him was one long contemplation of the failings of his ellow-men.

And this was the gentleman who, being on some temporary inves- igation within the lines of the department, had received telegraphic rders to proceed at once to Ryan and look into the matters thus loudly eralded by the press. Standing not upon the order of his going, he ad taken the first train, and reached the post at nightfall, eager to egin. It was a source of positive discomfort to him to find that he as expected by the post commander to dine at Captain Lane's; but is uneasiness was in no wise due to the lack of proper apparel. The olonel and the other officers were in full uniform, as was army custom ien, before a merciful and level-headed general authorized the wearing f civilian evening dress on such occasions. But Colonel Lawler was uite at ease in a travelling-suit of rusty tweeds. Morris had offered ie colonel the use of his own dress-suit, and in fact had rather urged , as due to Mrs. Lane, but Lawler promptly replied that Mrs. Lane ust have known when she asked him that he did not travel around a military duty with a spike-tailed coat, and declared that he thought all unnecessary. "Spike-tailed coats are too high-toned for me, any- ow. I never see a man in one but what he reminds me of some utler I've seen in Washington." Morris said no more, but Mrs. Iorris had looked volumes, and it was very ruefully indeed that the olonel presented his visitor to their gracious hostess. Dinner was nnounced almost immediately, and, ignoring for the time-being the oung lady whom he had taken in on his arm, Lawler sat for some inutes looking in no little surprise about him. The sight of so much legance at a frontier table could only convey to his mind the vague npression of peculation in the past. He was surprised to find that ane could have had no connection whatever with "cotton cases" uring the war.

And now was this young girl with the big dark eyes, looking so rankly yet scrutinizingly up into his face, quizzing him? The fact hat for nearly a quarter of a century he had been a commissioned

officer and was now high in rank, if not in public esteem, had given him a certain self-confidence of manner, and the consciousness of being the custodian of a host of official secrets added to his sense of self-importance. Yet, small and suspicious by nature, he was forever looking for some covert ridicule. He had come to the board a total stranger to Captain and Mrs. Lane, yet he felt a certain sense of superiority to them because he could, were he so disposed, tell that young matron a host of ugly things about her first husband. Of Lane himself he knew little or nothing beyond the fact that the proceedings of courts-martial of which he had served as judge-advocate were always correct. That he was known in the fighting force of the army as a brilliant and gallant soldier, who had been through many a hard campaign and had twice or thrice been wounded, was of no avail in Lawler's eyes. That might be a very proper thing in its way, but did not interest him. Just now he was casting up in his mind the probable cost of the dainty feast and wondering what means Lane had outside his pay. Miss Marshall, being from Cincinnati, would doubtless know something, and he proposed to put her on the witness-stand forthwith, but, lawyer-like, to lead up to the matter by adroit circumlocution. Yet at the first clumsily-essayed compliment she had looked up into his face, a merry light in her big, dark, scrutinizing eyes, and he became instantly suspicious that she was quizzing him. Lawler reddened at the very thought.

"You seem to have a very correct appreciation of the legal profession," he said, however, with an effort at a gallant bow. "Most young women, I fancy, are far more partial to that of a soldier, for instance."

"Most women, you know, admire courage and truth and straightforwardness, colonel."

"And you mean that these are more frequent in the army—that is, among the—the officers of the line—than in the legal profession, I suppose. Now, Miss Marshall, a celebrated chief justice, from whom you may be descended, as you bear the same name, was the embodiment of all these traits."

"And his mantle fell on the shoulders of many, I doubt not, colonel; but—was it big enough to go round?"

"I'm afraid you're satirical, Miss Marshall," said Lawler, with a superior smile. "You young ladies not infrequently see only the glamour and froth of army characteristics. We who have spent many years in the endeavor to keep the army straight cannot look upon the

officers quite as partially as you do. We see both sides of the double lives led by so many of the 'youngsters' in the line."

"Only by the line, colonel, and by the young officers? Then who looks after the staff, and the elders?" And Miss Marshall's face was bubbling over with fun.

"They have stood the test of years, Miss Marshall, and need no guardian, as do these young fellows who so captivate school-girls," answered Lawler, shifting uneasily in his chair. "Now, Mrs. Brodie has a mature conception of their merits and defects. She was speaking of this very case of Mr. Hearn's a moment ago.—You seem to have known him quite a while, Mrs. Brodie. Were you ever stationed together?"

"My! no, Colonel Lawler: only one cannot help hearing things," answered Mrs. Brodie, totally unaware of the facial contortions of her better half, who was helplessly, hopelessly striving to catch her eye and restrain her tongue. "Everybody in town seems to think he was such a popular young fellow; only, don't you know, so careless."

Colonel Morris and everybody at Mrs. Lane's end of the table happened to be deep in general chat at the moment, and neither saw nor heard anything of this sudden introduction of personal affairs at a social occasion. But Mrs. Morris lost no time. She saw Brodie's glowering eyes across the board; she noted Lawler's keen, shrewd gaze, and the troubled look that flashed over Lane's kindly face, and had just time to whisper to him, "How can you ever forgive us for bringing the man? The colonel was in misery at the idea. He said he knew he would be talking 'shop' before dinner was half over. I can check Mrs. Brodie, at any rate." Then, aloud, "Pardon me, Colonel Lawler," and now her face was wreathed in sweetest smiles, "I'm not going to let Mrs. Brodie prejudice you against one of my prime favorites."

"Oh, indeed, Mrs. Morris," protested Mrs. Brodie, "I wouldn't think of such a thing. I was just going to point out to the colonel the very great difference between what he might have been then and what he has been ever since he joined the Eleventh."

"But the point at issue seems to be what he was then, as Mrs. Brodie puts it," said Lawler.

"But I wouldn't for the world have you suppose I thought Mr. Hearn had done anything that was ungentlemanly. I'm only saying what rumor was," burst in Mrs. Brodie again, who had at last caught the signals on her husband's face, and now only sought to excuse her

own impetuosity, even though in so doing she more deeply involved the young gentleman himself. "I can't bear to hear such things said of him without any one to defend him; but what can one do?"

This was getting simply unbearable. While all at the other end of the table were having a merry, laughing chat, here was this professional investigator—an accidental and by no means welcome guest—taking advantage of the circumstances and of the well-known volubility of Mrs. Brodie to start her on the subject which called him to the post, and striving at a social party to "pick up points."

"By Jove!" muttered Captain Cross, "he's as bad as Mr. Abrams himself. What can we do to stop him? Nothing short of Divine Providence will ever stop Mrs. Brodie."

But the desired interposition came. Footsteps were heard on the piazza beyond the hall. The Chinaman, answering the summons to the door, came back, raising the portière that hung heavily over the entrance, and handed his master a card. Lane took it, and glanced quickly at Colonel Lawler.

"If you will excuse me," said the latter, rising at once, "these are gentlemen whom I telegraphed to meet me, and I will save time by seeing them here. I will just ask them into your parlor, Captain Lane." And, quitting the room, he passed through the hall-way and met his untimely callers at the door. Sam came shuffling back an instant after, having gone to turn up the parlor lights, and Miss Marshall, glancing over her left shoulder as the portière was again raised, saw that one of the men thus introduced beneath the captain's roof was the German Jew, Schönberg. Lane, busy in striving to restore the tone of general chat, did not see them at all.

It was an hour later. The ladies had risen and betaken themselves to the front piazza; the men remained to smoke a cigar with their host. The absence of the legal luminary, oddly enough, had dispelled the atmosphere of gloom that hung for a few minutes about the lower end of the table. He and his strange visitors were still closeted, so to speak, in the parlor, but now they came forth. In some mysterious way every woman had by this time learned that Mr. Schönberg was there, and at the sound of the opening parlor door and of the mellifluous accents of that gentleman's voice they instinctively huddled to *the other* end of the piazza. Lawler walked with the two men as far

s the gate, and, when they finally disappeared in the direction of the tore, came sauntering back to join the ladies.

"As I don't smoke," he said, "I will take my enjoyment here. Where shall I sit?"

"Take this chair, Colonel Lawler," said Miss Marshall, noting the version with which all the others of the party had become inspired. May I send for coffee for you?"

"Miss Marshall, I have no small vices. I never drink anything tronger than milk; never smoke; never chew; never swear."

"Never even swear, colonel?"

"Never. What is it you are smiling at?"

"Have you ever read the works of Josh Billings, Colonel Lawler?"

"I have no time to waste on nonsense, Miss Marshall. And I ever could see anything funny or witty in such men as Billings and Artemus Ward."

"Well, it wasn't his fun I was thinking of quite so much just now s his insight into character," said the young lady, musingly, as she till gravely looked him over with her big eyes.

Two young officers came strolling along the walk at the moment, nd, passing beneath the lamp, raised their caps in salutation to the adies. Miss Marshall nodded and smiled with marked cordiality.

"All wasted, Miss Marshall: they could not see it."

"No, colonel, and I particularly wanted one of them at least to do o. Now, that's a part of the army that I decidedly like."

"Who are they, may I ask?"

"Mr. Wallace and his especial friend, Mr. Hearn."

"And is it possible that you find such young men to your taste? I ave you credit for having rather a higher standard."

"But it is their standard that I so much admire, Colonel Lawler. don't suppose anything would tempt either of those young men to ay or do a mean or cowardly thing."

"No?" said the colonel, with a superior smile; "and yet, do you now, I'm ready to stake my professional reputation that one of them t least is quite unworthy your trust or confidence."

"Now, are you not a trifle prejudiced, colonel? I thought the law resumed a man innocent until proved guilty."

"Theoretically, yes; practically, men who have studied human ature through the courts, as I have had to, get to see through the eneering *of high tone that* these 'youngsters' are so apt to assume."

"And so you are probably quite ready to agree with the correspondent of the *Palladium*, colonel, that most officers are frauds, especially the second lieutenants?"

"My experience has certainly not given me a high opinion of the young men, Miss Marshall."

"And, now, do you know, colonel, my intuition is very much in their favor."

"But is your intuition as well founded, do you think, as long legal experience?"

"Well, your experience has been confined to the limited few that have come before courts-martial, has it not? My intuition covers the great array of their number,—the ninety-and-nine. Now, I haven't any especial knowledge of the matter you seem to be investigating, Colonel Lawler, but I fancy that evidence such as Mr. Schönberg might give would have little weight before a court of intelligent men."

"You will change your mind when you come to see the books, young lady."

"Have you changed yours?"

"No: they simply confirmed my judgment."

"Then my intuition was right, colonel."

"How so, may I ask?"

"It told me that you had prejudged the case."

At this moment the officers came sauntering out into the open air, joining the group of ladies, who had fled back to the western end of the piazza as soon as they saw their obnoxious visitor safely anchored by Miss Marshall's side.

"Where's Lawler?" queried Morris, in no pleasant tone. "Has he gone off with those fellows?"

"No; I'm here, colonel, getting a lesson in law which this young lady is so good as to give me." Miss Marshall flushed at the discourtesy in his tone, but gave no other sign. "I shall expect to see you appearing in the *rôle* of counsellor yet, Miss Marshall."

"Very well, colonel; if it ever comes to that I shall fall back on my intuition."

Miss Marshall's cheeks were still flushed and her eyes had a dangerous gleam under their dark and fringing lashes when she stepped a moment after into the lately-desecrated parlor.

"You appear to have had quite a tilt with our friend the judge-advocate," said Lane, who had come in for more cigars for his guests.

"I think I once told you I would not care to be cross-examined by you, Miss Marshall; and it looks as though he were not a little nettled."

"I hope I haven't been rude to a guest of yours, Captain Lane; but that gentleman makes me wish over and over again that I were a man. Did you know who his callers were?"

"I have just heard," said Lane.

There was sudden lull in the conversation on the piazza without, then the colonel spoke quickly:

"I wonder what that can be. That fellow yells in earnest, doesn't he?"

"What is it?" asked Lane, stepping to the door.

"Number Eight yelling for the corporal of the guard. Yonder they go."

Captain Cross, who was officer of the day, had quietly picked up his sword and hurried out of the southwest gate, while down the roadway could be heard the sound of rapid foot-falls. The call, however, was not repeated. Conversation soon became brisk and general, and in five minutes Cross came back.

"What was the matter?" asked Colonel Morris.

"Some civilians, sir, and one of our men, in a buggy, who said they came out by order of the general commanding the division, and had been detained here until after taps."

"Certainly; that's all right. Those were doubtless the witnesses Colonel Lawler sent for. Why wasn't the corporal of the guard sent down with them to pass them out?"

"Their buggy was tied the other side of the store, sir, and no one at the guard-house could see them start."

"Well, the sentry ought to have let them go anyhow, as soon as he saw who they were. We have no authority to hold civilians here."

"It wasn't the civilians the sentry was after, sir; he was perfectly willing they should go; but they had an enlisted man with them."

"Who?" asked Morris, with uncomfortable premonition of the answer.

"Private Welsh, sir, of C troop."

XI.

The week that followed the advent at Fort Ryan of the staff-officer from division head-quarters was one that the good people at the post

have not yet ceased talking about. Lawler had remained in the garrison only twenty-four hours, and went back eastward without a word as to his intentions, and, to the surprise of even Colonel Morris, without having sent for or spoken to the man most interested in his coming, —Lieutenant Hearn. This in itself was something that excited most unfavorable comment, for it was known that he had had long interviews with Mr. Abrams, the busy representative of the press, and that he had driven in town to spend some hours in questioning certain dubious-looking citizens presented to him one by one at the establishment of Mr. Schönberg. He had furthermore sent to the guard-house for Trooper Welsh,—once again there incarcerated by order of Captain Cross, who as officer of the day had arrested him for attempting to slip across sentry's post the previous night. And once again, to the dismay of the cavalry officers and the unconcealed ridicule of the infantry battalion, Colonel Morris had directed Welsh's immediate release.

"It was a misunderstanding, probably, Captain Cross," said the colonel, in conciliatory mood, to the old officer of the day, as he relieved him after guard-mount. "Welsh was given to understand that these gentlemen, who had just come from an interview with Colonel Lawler, had the authority of the department commander to take him to town with them, so as to be ready to make certain depositions early in the morning."

But Cross eyed his commander unflinchingly and said no word.

Among the infantry officers the opinion was openly expressed that between Abrams and Lawler and Trooper Welsh the colonel was simply demoralized. The crowd at dress-parade for several evenings was almost as big as that before spoken of, and, though the *Palladium* man did not again take position on the colonel's left during the ceremony itself, he was frequently at that officer's side when he made his way through the curious throngs, both in going to and returning from his post. And afterwards, with the eyes of the towns-people upon them, Private Welsh and the unterrified correspondent paced up and down the road in front of the cavalry barracks for half an hour; and the group sitting on Lane's piazza one evening especially could not help noting how ostentatiously the two conversed as they neared the white wicket-gate.

"*Wharton,*" quoth Martin, as for the sixth or seventh time the *swartly trooper* and his champion approached the captain's quarters,

"I'm consumed with envy. The time was when good-looking cavalrymen, like you and me, could command some small attention from the eyes of our friends and fellow-citizens in town; but our day is done. There are the popular heroes of the hour. Now, here comes Hearn's first sergeant. Surely he's not going to have the unbearable effrontery to remind Trooper Welsh that he ought to be cleaning up for guard to-morrow, when a gentleman of the press wants to talk with him?"

"Is Welsh for guard to-morrow?" asked Captain Lane, in some surprise.

"He is. The colonel relieved him from durance vile before guard-mount this morning, and I heard the first sergeant tell Hearn an hour ago that it was Welsh's turn for guard, and wanted to know whether he was to order him or not. Hearn said certainly."

"And the man cut parade to-night on plea that Mr. Abrams wanted to talk with him. He was the 'one private absent' reported from C troop," said Wharton. "That's the reason the sergeant is after him now, I fancy, either to arrest him, or else warn him for guard."

"If I were Hearn I'd quit attempting to discipline that young man," said Major Kenyon, pessimistic and glowering as ever. "He ought to have sense enough to know that the worst blackguard in the service, with the press behind him, is more than a match for any officer who seeks to do his duty."

"And if I were Hearn," drawled Martin, "I'd make that particular *protégé* of the *Palladium* do his duty, if I died for it, especially after he marked copies that came to-day. Now watch."

The first sergeant, a trim, soldierly fellow with determined face and manner and quick energetic step, had by this time overtaken the pair who, strolling together, had almost reached the picket fence and were within ear-shot of the Lanes' piazza. Mrs. Lane glanced eagerly up the road, for Miss Marshall and Lieutenant Hearn at that very moment came from the Whartons' quarters next door and appeared upon the gravel walk, Wallace following with Jeannette McCrea.

Sergeant Wren had stopped short on overtaking the trooper, and, with scant ceremony, addressed him in tones that all could hear:

"Welsh, you're for guard to-morrow, and you've got mighty little time in which to get ready. Did the lieutenant excuse you from parade?"

"I didn't ask him. Colonel Lawler was good enough for me."

"Colonel Lawler left the post at five o'clock, and couldn't have wanted you."

"All the same I was acting under his orders and nobody else's. If you want any other authority you can go to Colonel Morris: I'm busy now." And with his hands in his pockets, and a jerk of the head to his companion, Welsh whirled about and led the way down the road toward the store, Abrams slowly following in his wake, but looking back as though curious to see the sequel. The first sergeant stood an instant flushing and with wrathful eyes, but raised his hand in respectful salute as the young troop-commander came quietly along, Miss Marshall leaning on his arm.

"You warned him for guard, sergeant?" said Hearn, answering Wren's salute.

"Yes, sir; and he says Colonel Lawler excused him from parade."

"I reported the absence to Colonel Morris, and he tells me that there may have been some such understanding, sergeant. At all events, as Colonel Lawler has gone, he would give Welsh the benefit of the doubt: so we have nothing further to do with that matter."

Wren ground his teeth as he briskly strode back to his quarters.

"What does the loot'nant say?" demanded Duffy, as he with half a dozen of his comrades clustered about the office, eagerly watching the sergeant's face and his clinching hands, as he returned.

"Nothing. Don't ask questions now, you men. The lieutenant can't do anything to him; the colonel won't let him."

"The colonel won't, is it?" said Duffy, with a wrathful grin. "Be jabers, if I were colonel I'd command my rigiment, and no damned newspaper man would scare me out of it. It's the *Palladium* that commands Fort Ryan to-night, and that blackguard Welsh is post adjutant,—more shame to us all!"

"Silence, there, Duffy! No more of that talk!" ordered Wren, as he banged to the door of his own little den, and the knot of troopers scattered away. "All the same," muttered he to his faithful second, Sergeant Ross, "Duffy only tells the truth, and damn me if I ever thought the day would come when my old chief would knuckle down like that."

And if in garrison circles that night it was predicted that something would be the outcome of the detail of Welsh for guard-duty, no one was destined to disappointment. He appeared at the appointed time, and was curiously scanned by the other members of the troop, as, carbine in hand, he came slowly and indifferently down the stairway just as the trumpets began to sound the assembly of the details. Unluckily

for everybody who hoped to see Welsh brought up with a round turn by the snappy young adjutant, a drizzling rain had set in, and undress guard-mounting in overcoats was the result. Welsh's forage-cap and accoutrements might pass muster in a shower, but his full-dress rig every man knew to be wofully out of shape, and such was the fellow's unpopularity among his comrades by this time that audible regrets were expressed by the men that the weather had "gone back on them."

"Step out, there!" shouted Wren sharply to the dawdling soldier, as he gave the command to fall in.

"Get a move on you, Misther Welsh," laughed Duffy from the upper gallery. "Or don't they ever shtep out in the excellent family down East? Sure, isn't he a fine-looking, intelligent young man of twenty-five?"

"Twenty-five? 'Faith, it's thirty-six in months he'd get, if I was commanding," muttered Kerrigan. "How are your patriotic motives this morning, Mister American-Blood-with-the-Asshumed-Name?"

"Sure his name is Dennis," laughed Duffy again. "Quit your sneering, Kerrigan. The young soldier's eyes are blazing with pent-up feelings again, don't you see?" And indeed a most malignant scowl was that which Welsh launched aloft at his persecutors, whose fun was cut short by the stern voice of Sergeant Ross, ordering silence. And in another moment the detail of C troop was dancing away in double time, with a parting adjuration from Duffy not to go too fast: 'it's too aisy to set the blood boiling in Welsh's veins, anyhow."

It was in the ugliest possible mood that Welsh tossed up his carbine for the inspection of the officer of the guard. He had expected to pose as a hero and martyr. But, whatever might be the mistaken sentiments aroused in the East by the efforts of a paper that had exhausted local well-springs of scandal and sensation, here among those who knew the facts, and, above all, knew him, he had gained only ridicule and contempt. In all the garrison, now that Goss was gone, there was not a soldier who had ever stood his friend. In his own troop especially, where the rank and file were devoted to their young lieutenant, there was wrath and indignation at his expense, and well he knew that nothing but discipline saved him from a ducking in the river or a hearty kicking down the barrack stairs. Still, with Abrams to stand by him and the *Palladium* to champion his cause, he felt secure against fate; only he had thought to be looked upon as liberator and leader among the men, and they were all laughing at him. This was bitter indeed.

He almost hoped that the adjutant would order him back, replaced by the supernumerary, for the rust he knew to be about the breech-block of his carbine, and which the officer of the guard would be sure to discover. But the young lieutenant contented himself with pointing to it with white-gloved finger and passing on, probably thinking it best to get him on duty at any price.

All day long on guard the men had taken frequent occasion to declaim quotations from the *Palladium*, until by evening stables they had rung the changes on Welsh's excellent family connections, his American blood, his patriotic motives in enlisting, his ardor for the flag, and his fidelity to his oath, until he was ready to wish to heaven the *Palladium* had singled out anybody else to be the martyr for its preconcerted exposition of official tyranny in the army, and heartily sick of the part he had been induced to play.

But where, meantime, was Abrams? The day wore by, and not once had he come to the garrison, and Welsh, sulkily plodding up and down his muddy post near the stables, and knowing well that every time the men looked at him or nudged each other in the ribs they were guying him, had earnest desire to see his champion, and to prevent the publication of other letters they had projected, since the only effect, locally, of the assault upon the good name of his young officer was to bring down the indignation of the enlisted men upon himself. It only made him rage the more spitefully against Hearn, and he longed for an opportunity to vent his spleen.

When the devil is working in the human breast, opportunity is seldom lacking. The evening gun had thundered, the last notes of "retreat" had died away, and the sun, that had been obscured all morning, went down in a golden radiance, leaving a sheen of beautiful color lingering along the crest of the opposite bluffs and reflected in myriad millions of rain-drops still clinging to the clumps of buffalo-grass. Tempted by the loveliness of the evening, Mrs. Lane had ordered out her carriage, and the moment the report had been made after retreat roll-call and Mr. Hearn was returning sadly to his own quarters, Lane headed him off:

"No. I'm going to take you away from Wallace and Martin to-night, and I don't mean to let old Kenyon get his hands on you again. Mrs. Lane and Miss Marshall want you to drive with us an hour or so; *then* we'll come back and have a quiet little bite just among ourselves." *And Hearn* pressed the captain's hand and silently thanked him.

Half a dozen of the guard were seated about the rough stone porch f the gloomy old guard-house as the carriage came rolling by, and at ght of the occupants they quickly laid aside their pipes and respectlly arose and raised their hands in salute. The sentry on No. 1, ıcing sharply to the front, brought his rifle to the carry with a snap ıat made the bayonet ring. The one man who remained seated and aring sulkily at the carriage wore the cavalry uniform: it was /elsh.

Both officers noticed the fact as they touched their caps in acknowlgment of the courtesy of the infantrymen, and exchanged significant lances. The ladies, too, were quick to note what had happened, and ıey, too, looked at each other and then somewhat anxiously at Hearn. ıut the carriage whirled along. The instant it had passed, Corporal tein turned on Welsh. So did others of the guard.

"What do you mean by sitting there like that?" was the demand.

"I know my business," was the surly reply. "Just you 'tend to ours. You'd better study Tactics and Regulations before you try to ɜarn me anything."

"Oh, do let the high-spirited scion of our finest families alone, cororal. Can't you see it's turning his stomach to be civil to anybody?" rotested a tall infantryman.

"Ah, let up, now, on Mr. Welsh, *né* Mulligan—that's what they ılled ye in the Twenty-Third,—wasn't it Mulligan? Or was it Sullian? Sure I know the family, and it's a foine one," protested Private ɾelly, his blue eyes twinkling with fun.

Welsh sprang furiously to his feet, clinching his fist and making ɜraight for the laughing little "dough-boy." That young Celt, ıough a head shorter than his dark antagonist, in no wise disconɜrted, stood squarely facing him, and awaited the attack with a grin f genuine delight on his freckled face. Stein sprang forward, however, nd interposed.

"No fighting here," he ordered. "Wait till you're off guard in ıe morning, and settle it then."

"Don't thwart the gentleman, corporal. Here comes his friend he police reporter," laughed the group of guardsmen. But the unsual chaff had summoned the officer of the guard to the spot, and at ight of the lieutenant every Irishman in the party assumed an instanıneous expression of preternatural innocence. Mr. Abrams, too, had ɜined up in front of the trader's store, a few yards away, and, noting

the little knot of soldiers peering across the road, divined at once that something was going on, and so, with the instinct of his profession, hastened to the scene in time to catch a part of the colloquy that ensued.

"The corporal tells me the trouble grew out of your refusing to rise and salute when Captain Lane passed," said the officer of the guard, addressing the stalwart trooper.

Welsh glanced furtively over his shoulder until sure the *Palladium* man was in range of his voice, and then loudly replied,—

"I'm a member of the guard, sir, and the Regulations forbid guards paying compliments of any kind after 'retreat,' and I can show you the paragraph."

"You know perfectly well, Welsh, that that applies to the guard collectively when under arms, and not to individual members. I want no hair-splitting here. See to it that you pay proper courtesy to every officer while you're under my command." And the lieutenant, a young infantryman, with decidedly resolute face, looked squarely into the glowering black eyes of the trooper, and then, turning quietly toward his little office, his eye lighted on the *Palladium* man. For an instant it looked as though he had something to say to him too; but, struck by a sudden thought, he passed in without another word, and presently the sergeant of the guard appeared in the door-way. There was evident purpose in his coming.

Half an hour later Welsh was standing some twenty yards away, engaged in low-toned eager chat with his civilian friend. The faces of both men were clouded, and every little while the gypsy-looking soldier shot an angry glance toward the guard-house door. Presently they moved across the road and headed for the open bar at the trader's, wherein the lamps were just beginning to gleam. Before they reached its open portals, Corporal Stein was at their heels and his stern voice ordered Welsh to halt:

"Go back to the guard-house, Welsh: it's against orders for a member of the guard to leave it, and you know it as well as I do."

"My relief don't go on post for two hours yet, and this gentleman has business with me: you'd better not interfere with him."

"The gentleman can see you over there. You can't see him here."

Already the sergeant was striding across the road; the lieutenant appeared at the door; a dozen members of the guard were eagerly *watching* the scene. Welsh half turned. Mr. Abrams bent and mut-

ered a few words in his ear, but the soldier, after one glance around him, shook his head. Slowly and reluctantly he turned.

"I'll get even with you for this, Stein," he hissed. And then, with shrugging shoulders, the two objects of general interest—the civilian and the enlisted man—slouched back across the road, the eyes of all upon them.

It was at this instant that the rapid whirr of wheels and the click of iron-shod hoofs were heard upon the drive, and briskly the Lane carriage came around the turn. Lieutenant Lewis stepped out from the door-way. Again the sentry faced the road and carried arms; again the soldiers of the guard arose, and those about the trader's door, also, faced the road-way; again the white-gloved hands were raised in soldierly salute, and one man only turned his back and slouched away. Every soldier within range saw that Welsh was determined to disobey the orders he had just received. In six giant leaps the tall sergeant had reached his side.

"Halt, Welsh, and face about," he thundered, and then, as the man still strove to edge away under the wing of his civilian associate, laid a brawny hand upon the hulking shoulder and spun him about as he would a top.

"Heels together, now. Look square at Captain Lane. Now, then, damn you, left hand, *salute*."

"Not badly done, sergeant," said Lieutenant Lewis, a moment after, as with kindling eyes he reached the spot just as the carriage had dashed by.—"Finish what you have to say to your friend in fifteen minutes, Welsh, and then report to me at the guard-room."—"Not badly done," he repeated, as he turned away with the tall infantryman by his side; "only you shouldn't have said 'damn' in the presence of ladies, or," with a grim smile under his moustache, "or—of the press."

"The ladies couldn't hear, sir, and I meant that the press should. I know that according to 'Pinafore' and the *Palladium* I should have said, 'if you please.' But mules and blackguards pay no attention to politeness. I've been thirty years a soldier, sir, and I know what fetches them."

XII.

There were sore hearts at Ryan in the week that followed. As had long been anticipated, orders came for the summer practice march to

the Indian Territory, and the Eleventh—band and all—had jogged away, leaving Major Kenyon to command the post, with his little battalion of infantry to guard it. The orders were received two days after Welsh's enlivening tour of guard-duty. The command was to march in forty-eight hours, equipped for field-service, and Lieutenant Hearn, with the other troop-commanders, was occupied every instant in getting his horses and men in thorough shape. Kenyon and Lane, after consultation among some of his friends, had induced the young fellow to promise not to open one of the marked copies of the newspapers which now began to crowd in with every mail, but to leave them all to be considered by the little council of three in whose hands he had been persuaded to rest his case. He had written a full denial of the *Palladium's* scandalous statements with regard to his financial entanglements, and a full description, as has already been told, of the original trouble at the trader's store with Private Welsh. These had both been duly handed to Colonel Morris in his office. No one had heard from Lawler. No one knew just exactly what disposition the colonel had made of these papers. Mr. Abrams, too, had disappeared the day after Welsh's tour of guard-duty; but the whole garrison now was flooded with newspapers by the hundred. It would seem as if the guild of the Western press had resolved on a sudden and simultaneous assault on the army in general and as if Fort Ryan was the vortex of the storm. Sensational despatches were published from various quarters. Other journals, envious of the *Palladium's* exploit, unearthed other victims, long since out of the army for general worthlessness, and with flaming head-lines displayed to a sympathizing public the tale of official abuse and tyranny which had compelled these several gallant and patriotic sons of America to quit the service they were so well fitted to adorn. Dozens of tramps and tatterdemalions reaped sudden and unexpected harvest of eleemosynary quarters and lunches from gaping audiences in the beer-saloons by detailing individual experiences of their own when serving under Lieutenant this or that in the Eleventh Horse or the Thirty-Third Foot. Dozens of Munchausens wore the reporters' pencils down to the wood with details of their harrowing sufferings. Then the editorials began, and gravely lectured the people on the wrongs of the whole system,—the unrepublican character of an army anyhow, the repugnance in the American mind to all idea of discipline. Meantime, of course, the *Palladium* was firing hot shot by the *ton, and new so*-called scandals at Ryan, fresh outrages on the helpless

and down-trodden soldiery, were the subjects of Mr. Abrams's lurid delineations, until it was to be wondered at that in their wrath the offended public did not wipe the foul blot on their civilization from the face of the earth.

It was on Friday evening that, in answer to certain despatches he had been firing at department head-quarters, Colonel Morris received a message that at least put him out of uncertainty. That day the *Palladium* had outdone itself, and no one not conversant with the illimitable faculties of the paid correspondent can begin to imagine the heroic size attained in its columns by the incident briefly sketched in the last chapter: "Continued Persecution of Trooper Welsh! Heaped-up Humiliations on his Head! Forced to Show Slavish Homage to his Insulter! Helpless Wrath of Comrades!" etc. The details of the incident as told by the special correspondent lost nothing of sensationalism; and Lieutenant Lewis came in now for his share of obloquy. Poor Welsh was represented as having been marched out and with brutal curses compelled to salute Lieutenant Hearn, despite the fact that he as member of the guard was by law and Regulations exempted from the requirement. "In vain did the young soldier plead that paragraph 391 of the Regulations fully excused him. His relentless persecutors defied the laws of Congress and compelled him to 'stand and deliver' for the purpose of adding to the indignities already heaped upon him. Could the readers of the *Palladium* have heard the low, deep mutterings of the men in the garrison this night, no mutiny on their part need have surprised them." The editor, too, backed up his correspondent in a three-quarter-column assault on the ridiculous etiquette of the army. "It may be," he said, "all well enough in the conscripted camps of Europe, where whole nations are forced to service under arms, to exact of the rank and file this slavish exhibition to superiors; but it is an insult to the high intelligence of the soldiers of free America, that because a beardless boy happens to have a strap upon his shoulder, thousands of scarred veterans should be compelled to do him homage. The whole idea of the salute is repugnant to the republican mind, and should be abolished; and for that matter, as we have no further use for an army, why stop at the salute?"

No doubt the ninety-and-nine of the *Palladium's* readers thought their editor was sound, and were as opposed to the idea of that courtesy which is officially declared to be "indispensable among military men,"

as to any exhibition thereof in the streets of their own peaceful and remarkably well regulated metropolis.

But Colonel Morris was himself wofully perturbed about this time. After immolating Cross and other officers by name, as was to be expected, the *Palladium* man had taken to poking ugly little insinuations at the post commander; and this, thought Morris, was the height of ingratitude. He was in no pleasant mood when the men came marching up from stables, and it stung him to see how cordial everybody was to Hearn, who, confound it, was the cause of the whole row. The telegram he had just received settled that matter once and for all; yet he was glad he had an adjutant on whom to devolve the coming duty.

Ever since Hearn's trouble began, Captain and Mrs. Lane had lost no opportunity to make him understand that they were devotedly his friends, and that if he would but come to them in his sense of utter wrong the shelter of their home, the welcome of their fireside, would be some compensation at least for the harsh treatment accorded to him by the world at large. Thanks to the efforts of the Western newspaper, a million or more of free people had learned to look upon his name as the synonyme for all that was swaggering, brutal, drunken, and bullying; and it was easy to see that the young soldier was cut to the heart.

But an unexpected ally had been discovered. Hearn, who had at first held aloof in solitude, brooding over his troubles, began to show decided readiness to come. And though at all times grateful and most attentive to Mrs. Lane, that clear-sighted young matron speedily noted how his handsome blue eyes would wander about in search of her quietly-observant friend, and that ever since the night of her tilt with Lawler Miss Marshall's interest in the case had been quadrupled. Now, this was not exactly what Mrs. Lane had planned. She wanted Georgia to marry in the army, but she also wanted, and saw nothing in the least unreasonable in so wanting, to select that spirited young woman's husband for her. She did not for a moment think that there was any danger of Georgia's falling in love with Hearn. He was several years her senior, to be sure; he was handsome, distinguished as a soldier, a man of unimpeachable character, as modern men go; but, she argued, "he is so much younger for his years than Georgia for hers." She had had to think so much for herself, and now the man she should marry was—well, not crabbed old Major Kenyon, of course; *he was a widower*,—sour and yet susceptible. It was only too plain *that he loved to* come to the house and talk with Miss Marshall by the

our, especially when the cavalrymen were all down at stables. Neither id she want the doctor, whom Jeannette McCrea could have if she ould only make up her mind to drop Jim Wallace, who was now so evoted that the yearning medical man had no chance whatever. No; he didn't see, after all, just the right man for Georgia: still, she had lways thought of some one so much older, utterly ignoring the fact hat when left to themselves most women have very different views of heir own. Not a word had she uttered to Georgia, of course, but to er loving and indulgent spouse she had gone so far as to say,—

"It is lovely to see how he is beginning to find comfort in her ociety; but, Fred——" And Madame breaks off, irresolute yet uggestive.

"But, Mabel——" responds her gray-eyed lord, with indefiniteness qual to her own.

"Just suppose——" And then another pause on her part.

"Just suppose what, Mrs. Lane?—that it should snow before eptember?"

"Now, Fred, you know; or else you haven't any eyes for——"

"I haven't—except for one," says Lane, parrying the situation with he very words he knows will most delight her.

"You absurd boy!" But she comes fluttering across the room to eward him as he deserves. "What I mean is, Georgia might get to hink of him."

"Well, everybody is thinking of him just now, and in the light of uch a catastrophe I suppose I'd have to make him think of her."

"He does now; and if he doesn't—you can't make people fall in ove, can you?"

"Agreed, Mrs. Wisehead. Neither can you prevent it, can you? know I couldn't stop a fellow from falling in love with you some ew years ago, hard as I tried. The more I tried to put you away, the nore you kept coming into that fellow's empty head." (Here Captain ane is rewarded again, and as soon as able to speak resumes.) "So hy worry now?"

"Well, I'm not worrying, exactly, only——"

"Only what? Every man can't have a wife like mine. Still, vouldn't she make rather a good one?"

"Good? Goodness! But the question is to find the right man. However, I know what you mean, Fred,—Don't interfere; so I won't. And there they are chatting in the parlor yet, and it's time for him to

get ready for parade—— Why, here's Mr. Mason!" And Mrs. Lane, who had slipped into the dining-room, caught sight of the adjutant at the front door.

"What is it, Mason?" asked Lane, a sudden trouble in his eyes, as he hurried through the hall.

"The colonel wishes Mr. Wharton to assume command of C troop temporarily. I'm ordered to place Hearn in arrest," was the answer, in tones that trembled a little despite Mason's efforts at impassibility.

Lane's hand was extended, as though to close the parlor door, which stood ajar, but he was too late. The clink of the scabbard without had already been heard, and almost at the instant Hearn stepped forth into the hall.

"You won't have far to look, old fellow. Here I am."

"My heaven, Hearn! I thought to find you over home, or I would never have come here on such an errand."

"Never mind; I am with you. Good-by, captain; say good-afternoon to—to the ladies for me."

"By Jove! I'm going over with you," said Lane, snatching a forage-cap and springing down the steps. He did not want to encounter the questioning eyes within.

But Mabel and Georgia Marshall met at the parlor door.

"Have you heard—do you know?" was the faltering question of the former.

"Hear! Know! Who could help hearing? Is it not an outrage?"

XIII.

If Frank Hearn were a wronged and unhappy man before the regiment marched away, his troubles seemed only intensified now. Deprived of the command of his troop and confined to his quarters in close arrest, he was confronted by a new sorrow, one least expected, yet hardest of all to bear.

The sharp assaults of the *Palladium* to a certain extent had been discontinued. One great and influential journal of the Northwest had taken the pains to investigate the situation independently, and was now giving its readers the benefit of the facts in the case of the much-heralded martyr Welsh. And when that eminent patriot was thus shown up in *his true colors* the other papers had to moderate their ecstasies on his

account. Very few managing editors, indeed, had not already been shrewd enough to see what he must inevitably turn out to be. But the originators had hoped to effect their onslaught on the army before the actual character of their witnesses was exposed. The moment the *Pioneer* came to the rescue it was time for them to change the line of attack, for no one of their number dared lock horns on a question of fact with a journal so fearless and respected. Still, as a lie can never overtake the truth, and as in this case the lie had a week's start, these exponents of the ethics of American journalism had reason to feel moderately well satisfied. It would be prudent, however, to let the matter "simmer" now; and there were other reasons, too: so Mr. Abrams was recalled from his mission to Central City, and set to work at the foundations of the character of a gentleman just spoken of in connection with the coming municipal elections. He had hitherto borne an unimpeachable name in the community, but his friends had committed the grievous offence of speaking of him for mayor before the *Palladium* had been consulted, and it therefore became the *Palladium's* duty to pull his props from under him.

Contenting himself for the time-being with the announcement that the military authorities at division and army head-quarters had expressed their deep sense of obligation to the *Palladium* for having brought to light the scandalous condition of affairs at Fort Ryan, and that it had received their assurances that as the result of its efforts Lieutenant Hearn would be brought to trial by court-martial, this public-spirited journal wisely turned its attention elsewhere. Other papers, of course, kept up the hue and cry, but, the *Pioneer's* columns having warned them that their martyr was, after all, only a scamp, and their victim a young officer with a capital military record whom the court might, after all, acquit, it became necessary to prepare the public mind for such a *bouleversement* by pitching into military courts in general as "Star Chamber" affairs, organized only to convict privates and whitewash officers; one journal going so far as to announce that a "court-martial for Lieutenant Hearn meant simply that a body of men, each and every one of whom was in the daily habit of violating every rule of decency and humanity, was to sit in judgment on his case and declare him innocent."

All this, of course, came duly marked and with pencil comment to Mr. Hearn from scores of anonymous senders, as he sat dazed and disheartened in his *cheerless* room; but this was not all. Nearly two

weeks had elapsed now since the first assault, and the home letters, for which he had looked with mingled fear and longing, had begun to come. The first he opened was from his mother. She had received the marked copies of the *Palladium* of the first three or four days, sent no one knew by whom, and they were quickly followed by others.

What was it Thackeray wrote?—"There are stories to a man's disadvantage that the women who are fondest of him are always the most eager to believe."

A devoted woman and mother was Mrs. Hearn, but her sole knowledge of army life was derived from what she had seen around their nearly ruined home in a Southern city about the close of the war. Frank's boyhood was spent in straitened circumstances, but little by little his father's toil and pluck had restored their fallen fortunes, and, a stanch soldier himself, he could not wonder that the young fellow's heart should be wrapped up in the hope of a commission. Poor Mrs. Hearn! she had looked for something far different, and even her pride at Frank's winning a cadetship at West Point by competitive examination did not reconcile her to his entering upon a profession which would associate him with such characters as she had seen about the time the great army was being disbanded and hundreds of officers seemed to have nothing to do but carouse. By the time he was graduated, his father's practice had become so well established as to warrant the squire-colonel's yielding to his wife's pleadings. Secretly he rather wanted the boy to go on in his career, and was prouder of the chevrons the handsome young cadet captain had worn than of the old tarnished sleeve-knots that he had put away so reverently the day after Appomattox, where Lee's kindly hand had rested for a moment on his arm when he went to bid his beloved chief adieu. Yielding to her entreaties, he offered Frank good inducements to drop the army and come home and study law, but the youngster said his heart was bound up in the cavalry. The mother had let him go with prayers and tears. The letters from Ryan were buoyant, and made no mention of care or trouble of any kind. How could he ask his father's help when he had refused his offer? The colonel rejoiced at the youngster's independence and decision, although he said nothing to his wife. Then came Frank's orders for Arizona, and Mrs. Hearn sobbed herself to sleep. Again the father said, "Resign if you like, and I'll start you here," but in the solitude of his library he kissed the boy's letter and blessed him in his heart of hearts for replying, "I wouldn't be my father's son

were I to resign now, with the prospect of sharp fighting ahead." Heaven! with what trembling hands and tear-dimmed eyes he read the glowing words of old Captain Rawlins's despatch telling how brilliant and daring the boy had been in the first fierce battle with the Apaches! He draped the stars and stripes over Frank's picture in the parlor, and bade the neighbors in to drink to the New South and the old flag, and even Mrs. Hearn, ever pessimistic and filled with secret dread of vague temptations that she knew not of, fearing them more than peril or ambuscade, took heart and strove to rejoice that Frank was such a soldier. How shocked and sorrow-stricken they were when but a short time after came the tidings of the old captain's lamented death! How they studied all Frank's letters, and learned to know the regimental officers through his eyes, and longed to meet that capital adjutant, Lane, when he came to Cincinnati recruiting! Colonel Hearn even took a few days off and the north-bound "flyer" on the Queen & Crescent to go thither and make the acquaintance of his boy's friend, and sat for hours with Lane at the club, listening to his praise of Frank. Then came the eastward move again, and a brief leave, and the mother's heart yearned over her stalwart son, wondering at the bronze and tan of his once fair skin and rejoicing in the strength of his handsome face. Mother-like, she sought long talks with him and strove to catechise him as to what they did when not actually in the field. Was there not a great deal of dissipation? Did they not play cards? Were there not too many temptations to drink wine? What opportunity had they for attending divine service? etc. So far as he himself was concerned, he answered frankly, but as to his comrades, all these questions he had laughingly parried. He had now been six years an officer, and had never once asked his father for money, yet she nursed her theory that under it all there was something hidden. From childhood she had been taught that army life meant frivolity and dissipation, if not vice; and now at last, when her husband was miles away from home, looking after investments he had made in Florida, came this startling and terrible confirmation of her fears. In glaring head-lines, in crushing, damning terms, in half a score of prominent Northern papers she read of her son as a drunken bully, a gambler, an abusive tyrant to the helpless men committed to his charge, and, utterly overwhelmed, the poor soul had thrown herself upon her knees to implore of Heaven the strength to bear the dreaded blow, and wisdom to guide *her aright* in the effort to reclaim her wayward boy.

The gray-haired pastor, for whom she had sent, came and mingled his tears and prayers with hers, and then they had between them written the letter that was now before him:

"It is but the confirmation of a long-haunting fear. I have all along felt that you were holding back something from me, my son; and God only knows how I have prayed that this cup might be spared me and this sin averted from you. I dreaded the temptation of army life for one of your impulsive temperament. I strove, I rebelled, against the idea of your being subjected to such companionship. I hoped against hope that it might not be as I feared; but, alas! my intuition was right, after all. Do not think I am angry, my boy. Do not let this drive you from us. As soon as it is over, come home, and all that a mother's love can do shall be done to spare you further bitterness. My first impulse was to wire your uncle James at Washington to ask if something could not be done to avert the court-martial; but good old Dr. Wayne, whose son was in the army before the war, tells me that it is hopeless, and that the best that can be done is to get your resignation accepted, so that, though you have to quit the service, as he says, it may not be by the disgrace of a sentence. I have, therefore, wired James to go at once to the Secretary, and Dr. Wayne has also invoked the aid of some influential friends. Wire me instantly on receipt of this, that I may know that you are bearing up manfully. It will soon be over. May God sustain you, my son, is the prayer of your devoted and distracted

"MOTHER.

"P.S.—Frank, my worst anxiety is on your poor father's account. I dread to think of the effect this news will have upon him. He never appreciated the danger as I did."

And this was the letter poor Hearn was almost raging over when the door opened, after a single prefatory bang, and in came the major:

"Hello, lad! how are you to-day? The regulations which forbid your visiting the commanding officer don't prevent his coming in to see you, I suppose. Any more newspaper attacks? You couldn't have got much worse if you had been running for President of these United States. I see that three papers of my beloved home are now calling me ugly names because my brother published a letter in which I had the temerity to say to him that Welsh was a sneak and Abrams a slouch *and you a soldier*; but I never expect anything better. Why, Hearn,

my boy, forgive me. Something's wrong, and here I'm rattling away and never seeing it."

"Read that," said Hearn; and the major read, with wonderment and concern deepening in his grizzled face, then turned away to the window with a long whistle.

"Well, lad, that is something even I hadn't thought of. By gad, I'm going to write a few lines to your good mother on my own hook: she reminds me of mine. No; no shutting yourself up in your bedroom now. Come out here on the piazza, where there's sunshine, and where there will be roses presently. Mrs. Lane and Miss Marshall have gone over to the hospital with some jellies for Brent, and it's time for them to return. Come out, I say, or, as commanding officer of the post, I'll send a file of the guard to haul you out. You've lost three shades of tan in four days, and I'm not going to let you mope in here, if I have to annul your colonel's order of close arrest and give you extended limits. Come out."

There was no resisting the major; there was no resisting the deeper longing in his heart. Every day since his incarceration Mrs. Lane had found means to send him some friendly little note, together with dainties of domestic manufacture; every day she and Miss Marshall had appeared at least once or twice upon the walk in front, although he could not join them; and now they were interesting themselves in Corporal Brent, said the major, and the corporal was getting well enough to be read to a little while and to see some of his chums for a few minutes and to inquire how he had been hurt. Kenyon fairly towed his prisoner out through the hall and landed him on the veranda just as the noonday drum was sounding orderly call, then rattling out "Roast Beef of Old England" in hoarse accompaniment to the piping of the fife.

Half an hour later, two parasols could be distinguished above the low shrubbery farther east along the row, and the ladies on Burnham's veranda, where the doctor was seated in clover, now that Wallace had ridden away, stepped forward to the hedge and accosted the bearers and strove to persuade them to stay. Hearn's heart seemed to halt in protest, then pounded gladly away again, for the delay was but momentary, —phenomenally short for feminine chats; but the mail was coming, and Mrs. Lane was impatient to get her letters. Once more the parasols came floating along above the hedge. One, held some six inches higher than the other, was on the outside, farthest from the fence. That was *hers*, and she it must be who would first come in sight from behind the

big lilac-bush in Brodie's yard. If Mrs. Brodie should happen to see them and stop them! But no; Mrs. Brodie went across the parade to the Crosses' half an hour ago, thank heaven. Hearn's eager eyes were fixed upon the outer edge of that lovely lilac screen, longing for the first glance of the face he had seen in his dreams night and day now for nearly a week. If she were thinking of him, if he were anything to her, would not she be apt to look toward this veranda the instant she hove in sight around that sheltering bush? "Yonder they come now," said Kenyon, slowly lowering his boot-heels from the balcony rail. "I'm going to stop them at the gate to see how Brent is."

Another instant, and once more the floating fringes of the outer parasol came sailing slowly into sight beyond the lilacs, then the white ferrule, a daintily-gloved hand, a white-draped shoulder, then a proudly-poised, dark-haired head, thick, low-arched eyebrows and long curling lashes through a flimsy web of veil that hung almost to the rosy lips, close compressed; then sudden upward sweep of lash, a quick, straight glance from two deep, dark eyes, a gleam of joy, of glad recognition, an instant parting of the curving lips and a flash of white, even teeth, and Hearn's heart throbbed and bounded. She had seen him instantly, and was glad.

Yet it was Mrs. Lane who had to do most of the talking, for Georgia Marshall was strangely silent. Every now and then her eyes seemed to take quick note of the pallor of his face and the lines of care and trouble. Kenyon had held open the gate and quietly steered the two ladies to the veranda, where Hearn was hastily placing chairs; and though the mail-orderly was approaching and Mrs. Lane knew there must be letters from her captain, she could not take Georgia instantly away, and so for a few moments they sat there, in their dainty summer gowns and with deep sympathy in their eyes,—eyes so different in color, yet so like in expression, they would have cheered a sorer heart than Hearn's.

The orderly carrying the mail came briskly in at the gate.

"I left Mrs. Lane's letters at the house, ma'am," he said, as he handed a package to Kenyon and proceeded to unload half a dozen bulky newspapers on Hearn. Kenyon had opened his official letter with brief "excuse me," and then began to chuckle:

"Hearn, my boy, they mean to do you all proper honor. Just look at this detail, will you? Four or five colonels and majors and

half a dozen captains to sit in judgment, and——well, if this don't beat all! old Lawler himself for judge-advocate."

Hearn's face was flushing and paling by turns.

"You don't mean that Colonel Lawler himself is detailed?"

"Certainly I do; and what do you want to bet the *Palladium* doesn't say that this was done in deference to its suggestion that no biassed associates of the accused officer should be allowed to officiate, as the people will tolerate no whitewashing of character in this most flagrant case, or words to that effect? Oh, I know those fellows! There's more conceit in one newspaper office in my beloved home than in all the armies in Christendom."

The ladies had risen, Mrs. Lane's eyes saying plainly to her friend, "We ought to go."

"Does the court meet here?" asked Hearn, quietly. "Please don't go, Mrs. Lane,—not just yet."

"Indeed we must, Mr. Hearn. I know you need to confer with the major now, and we will only be in the way."

Hearn's eyes had sought Miss Marshall's. She was standing by the balcony with half-averted face, yet listening intently.

"The court meets here, and on Monday of next week. Verily, Hearn, public wrath demands a prompt trial of your villany. Now, with Lawler to prosecute, you'll need a friend to defend. Who is it to be?"

"I have not asked any one," said Hearn, slowly. "The charges have not yet reached me. I do not know of what I am to be accused, who are the witnesses, or anything about it. Whom could I ask to oppose Lawler?"

Miss Marshall had slowly turned, and now looked full at Kenyon's troubled face. Her slender hands were clasping; her breath seemed to come and go almost too quickly.

"There's no man here fit to advise you, Hearn, and I know of no one quite a match in subterfuge for that 'Tombs Lawler,'" was the reluctant answer.

"Then I'll fight it out alone as best I can," said Hearn, at last.

The ladies were going; Mrs. Lane was down the steps already, and the major gallantly striving to raise her parasol. Hearn had clasped Miss Marshall's slender hand as she turned to say adieu, and the frank cordial pressure emboldened him. He would have held it firmly, but as firmly, yet gently, it was withdrawn.

"Only a week yet, Mr. Hearn," she spoke, her bosom rising and falling quickly. "Is there no officer you know to take up this case for you?"

"I fear not, Miss Marshall. You know I'm not even a first lieutenant yet; and he is a lieutenant-colonel."

She looked up one instant in his eyes, then with sudden impulsive movement held forth the hand she had just withdrawn.

"Good-by," she said, turned quickly, and was gone.

For a moment the two friends walked on in silence.

"A penny for your thoughts, Georgia."

"I wish I were a man."

"On his account, is it? Don't you know—he would far, far rather have you just as you are?"

XIV.

A general court-martial was in session at Ryan, and for three days had been sitting in judgment on Lieutenant Hearn. It was the first occasion in many a long year on which Colonel Lawler had appeared in the *rôle* of judge-advocate, that complex and contradictory position wherein the so-called legal adviser of the court, having prosecuted in the name of the government to the extent of his ability, proceeds to demolish his own elaborately-planned attack. It is the not infrequent result of such a system that the exertions of the prosecution so exhaust its representatives that the defence is left to its own devices, and in the case of Colonel Lawler, as has been said, he had always held that when an officer was under trial the moral obligation of the government was to find him guilty, if a possible thing.

No one on the court could quite understand why Lawler had been detailed for this duty. It was a most unusual thing to call upon the officers of the department of military justice itself to furnish the prosecutor; rather was it their province to remain at the office of the division or department commander, and, in reviewing the records, to sit in judgment on the judges. But the *Palladium*, true to Kenyon's prophecy, was not slow in explaining the situation. It was a case in which the whole people, with itself as their representative, had demanded the trial of the officer who dared maltreat the man. No ordinary occasion was this, but one to attract wide attention throughout the entire nation and be daily reported by the press. Colonel Lawler saw *opportunity for* distinction hitherto unequalled; he *asked* of his general

the detail as judge-advocate of the court, and the general, though surprised, saw no way to refuse.

So carefully had the court been chosen that of its entire array of thirteen members every man was personally a stranger to the young soldier whose fate lay in their hands. Of all his regiment not another officer was at the post when the court began to arrive, and the only soldier—heaven save the mark!—was Welsh, now assigned, much to their disgust, to Captain Brodie's company of the infantry for rations and quarters until his evidence should be given; and Welsh was the constant centre of a group of newspaper men now billeted at Central City and resenting it not a little that they were not invited to put up at the fort.

But, as matters stood, the fort was already taxed to its utmost capacity: the only quarters in which there was room for the arriving gentlemen were those of the absent cavalry officers. Mrs. Morris had two spare rooms, and promptly invited Colonels Grace and Maitland, old friends of her husband, to be her guests. Kenyon took in three of the seniors. Mrs. Wharton happened to know Captain Chase, who was one of the detail, and scandalized Mrs. Brodie by borrowing the Lane barouche, meeting him at the depot, and driving him straight to her roof.

"Mind you," said that young matron, "*every* man on this court shan't go to its first session without knowing something of Frank Hearn's real character. I only wish I had room for more."

Mrs. Lane had no spare bedroom, but bade her regimental friends who had, to fill them up with members of the court. "Georgia and I will board the whole array, if you will only let us," she declared. "I'll set a lunch for the court at noon, and dine the entire party at seven every day they are here, if some one will only agree to take Colonel Lawler."

Nobody wanted Lawler, and so he was one of the three relegated to the gloomy precincts of old Kenyon's quarters and compelled to rough it at bachelor mess. It was arranged that eight members of the court should be quartered among the cavalry homesteads and otherwise be entertained at the Lanes'. Of such are the expedients to which garrisons are subject.

It was not until Monday afternoon that the court began its session. Two officers had telegraphed that they could not reach the post until the arrival of the noon train; but all that morning and most of Sunday the judge-advocate had been bustling about the garrison, full of im-

portance and enthusiasm. Recognizing the interest felt in the case by an entire neighborhood, and sedulously active in providing for the needs of the press, Lawler had caused the quarters of C troop to be cleared of all the iron bunks. Arm-racks and lockers were shifted away; a long table had been brought up from the mess-room underneath and set in the middle of the big room, the president's chair at the head, his own at the foot, those of the members at the sides. Another long table was provided for the swarm of newspaper correspondents, and then, for the general public, the mess-rooms of the cavalry had been ransacked, and benches and chairs to accommodate several hundred people ranged about the room. It was Saturday night when Lawler arrived and was met by Major Kenyon and escorted to his quarters.

"You might tell Mr. Hearn that whatever he may desire to say to me about the case I can hear to-night. You have no objection to his coming to your quarters, I suppose?"

"Lord, no! I like it. So does he, generally; but if you want to see Hearn you'll have to go yourself."

"Why?" said Lawler, reddening. "He ought to know that it is to his interest to seek the advice and assistance of the judge-advocate. Of course he knows that I must do my full duty in prosecuting the case; but, outside of that, any service I can render him he has a right to call for."

"Oh, he understands; but, as he was given no opportunity to speak for himself when you were investigating the case, I fancy he will ask none now, until he comes before the court. Then you probably will hear from him."

"It might be very much better if he were to frankly consult the judge-advocate," said Lawler, gazing keenly at Kenyon from under his shaggy brows.

"Very much better for the prosecution. But—how better for him?"

"Well, those young men never gain anything by fighting a case. He had much better throw himself on the clemency of the court. But I suppose some one has undertaken to defend him?" Another shrewd glance.

"*Some* one! yes, I've heard that several some-ones offered their services by first mail the moment it was known you were to be prosecutor. *What* the devil did you take it for, anyway?"

"You seem to forget, Major Kenyon, that it was a matter of very rave importance to the army as well as to the public," said the colonel, 'ith much dignity. "Officers who are rash enough to seek to defend im can have little conception of the feeling aroused throughout the ntire North."

"True," said Kenyon, with sarcastic emphasis. "It's one of the ingular traits of some fellows in the army that, instead of meekly nuckling under to what they know to be an outrageous misrepresenta- ion of themselves and their profession, they should have the consum- ıate effrontery to resent even newspaper attacks. Now, you can hardly onceive it possible, Colonel Lawler, but, do you know, there are actu- lly officers who think Hearn a thousand times more sinned against han sinning? And, that being their conviction, they are so blind to heir own interest as to be willing to fight for it. It is incomprehensible —to some people; but it's a fact."

And—will it be believed?—when Colonel Lawler sent his orderly o say that he would receive Hearn at Major Kenyon's quarters in case ıe desired to see him, the orderly came back with the lieutenant's ompliments and the singular response that the lieutenant knew of no eason whatever why he should want to see the colonel at any time.

Lawler had conceived it his duty then to accost Mr. Hearn on the ıiazza of his quarters, and blandly to inform him that he was entitled, f he saw fit, to call in the services of some suitable friend as *amicus uriæ*. Brodie and Cross were both sitting there at the moment, and ;lanced at each other with a grin, as Hearn coolly looked the judge- ıdvocate straight in the eye and remarked that he was aware of the act.

"I thought you might not know it, and I desired to say that I hould interpose no objection," said Lawler.

"I am not aware, Colonel Lawler, that it is the judge-advocate vho either denies or consents. It is the court, as I understand it, that ettles the question." And Lawler went away with tingling ears. Hearn's temper was being sorely tried. No less than four times that Sunday morning had he been called upon by gentlemen representing hemselves as correspondents for some paper or other, each one of whom lesired to interview him as to the line of defence he proposed adopting, ınd really seemed astonished that he should decline to give any infor- nation on the subject. And Hearn's replies to Lawler had been buzzed ıround the garrison with added emphasis at every repetition.

And yet, when Monday afternoon came, and, in the presence of a crowded array of civilians from all over the neighborhood, Colonel Lawler impressively inquired the name of the gentleman whom the accused desired to introduce as counsel, and even the fans ceased to flutter, and all ears were intent upon the reply, and a dozen pencils were poised over the pads on the reporters' table, Mr. Hearn astonished almost all hearers by placidly, even smilingly, responding,—

"Nobody."

"Why, I understood from gentlemen here at the post that you intended to introduce counsel," said Lawler, much nettled.

"With all deference to the court," said Hearn, "the understanding of the judge-advocate is at fault."

There was instant titter, and a ripple of applause. The correspondents glanced quickly at one another and then in surprise at Hearn. For a man who refused to talk at their bidding, he was displaying unlooked-for ability now. Lawler reddened to the roots of his hair and glanced angrily around.

"The audience must keep order," he said. "You are at liberty to witness these proceedings, but audible comment or any levity at attempted witticisms on the part of the accused will not be tolerated."

But Hearn's face wore a provokingly placid smile. And the president, rapping on the table with the hilt of his sword, called for silence and curtly demanded of the judge-advocate that he proceed with the case.

Not ten feet from where Mr. Hearn sat by his little table, whereon were his memoranda and a few books, Georgia Marshall, with sparkling eyes and flushed cheeks, bent and whispered to Mrs. Lane,—

"One for our side."

And Mrs. Wharton, catching the eye of some friends across the room, very improperly tapped the back of her kid-covered thumb-nails together in mute applause. The press and the populace might be with the prosecution, but it was easy to see that there were loyal and lavish hearts there stanch for the defence.

The court had not been authorized to sit without regard to hours. Lawler argued that in a case of such wide-spread interest the sessions should be held when it would be most convenient for the world at large to attend, and by adjourning at three P.M., the conventional hour, all good citizens would be able to get home in abundance of time, secure *in the belief that* nothing would transpire before they could return to

their post of observation on the morrow. Nothing of great consequence was accomplished on the first day, beyond the ceremony of swearing the court, which Lawler rendered as impressive as possible, the administering of the judge-advocate's oath, which Colonel Grace rattled through in a perfunctory style that robbed the legal gentleman of the dramatic effect he had contemplated, and the reading of the charges and specifications, which were breathlessly listened to by the throng and most oratorically delivered by the judge-advocate. There was something especially fine in the air with which he turned and faced the soldierly young officer who, in his trim fatigue uniform, stood opposite to him at the table.

"To the first specification of the first charge, how say you, sir?—guilty or not guilty?"

And, in the simplest way in the world, the answer came in tones sufficiently clear to be audible beyond the open window:

"Not guilty."

And so to each and every specification and to the charges of conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman and of conduct prejudicial to good order and military discipline, Lieutenant Hearn calmly protested his entire innocence, and the pleas were duly recorded.

Then Colonel Lawler announced that in view of the importance and probable length of the case he desired the services of a stenographer and requested the authority of the court to call one in. The president looked perturbed; stenographers were expensive, and the last court he was on had been rapped over the knuckles for employing one, although the record exceeded a hundred and fifty pages in length.

"How long will you need one, and how soon can you get him here?" asked Colonel Grace.

"Well, we can get through with the case in very short time with a stenographer, but it will take a week at least without one." He did not say, however, that he had one already in the room, in the shape of a newspaper man from Chicago. Some of the court began to consult among themselves.

"Make him write his own proceedings," whispered Colonel Maitland to the president. "By gad, he was probably the man that rapped your court for employing one there at Omaha last month." Then he scribbled a line and tossed the scrap of paper over to Major Putnam on the other side, and passed word down to Captain Thorp, who had

been judge-advocate of the court in question. It was evident that the members thought that here was an admirable chance to "work" the judge-advocate, a thing seldom enjoyed; and at last old Grace, humming and hawing a little, said that the court could not see the necessity, in view of the remarks made by division head-quarters on a recent case, and must for the present decline the request. Whereat Colonel Lawler, in manifest ill humor, remarked that he could be safely expected to say what would and what would not be approved by the division commander, and that, if the court would not order it, he would get the order by telegraph.

"All right," said the president; "and meantime we'll proceed without one. I suppose you are ready with your first witness, Mr. Judge-Advocate?"

"If the court insists, yes; but I prefer to wait until I hear from the telegram which I am now writing."

"We had better go right ahead," said Colonel Grace.

And so, amidst profound silence, the name of the first witness was called; and with the eyes of the entire room upon him, neatly dressed, cleanly shaved, and looking his very best, Trooper Welsh was ushered in from the outer gallery, was sworn impressively by Lawler, and was asked for his name, rank, and regiment, and whether he knew the accused. The new correspondent of the *Palladium* described the hasty glance which Welsh cast at the lieutenant as one in which "his glowing, dark eyes kindled with the pent-up sense of the wrongs and humiliations heaped upon him by the officer in question." Major Kenyon, sitting close by Mrs. Lane, looked at Brodie with swift whispered comment on that furtive glance. Miss Marshall never took her eyes from the witness's face.

"State how long you have been in service, and with what company you have served."

"I've been——" then there was a sudden flutter of the eyelids and a moment's hesitation, but only a moment's,—"I've been in Troop C, Eleventh Cavalry, about eight months, stationed here at Fort Ryan. I enlisted in St. Louis a year ago."

The judge-advocate was just writing out the answer, when Miss Marshall leaned over and whispered a word to Kenyon. The major nodded appreciatively and looked eagerly along the faces of the members of the court across the table. Captain Thorp's eyes met his, *and it was Thorp* who suddenly spoke:

"The witness has not answered the question, as I understand it."

"He has answered as the court understands it," said Lawler, sharply, "and entirely to my satisfaction."

"He may have answered to the satisfaction of the judge-advocate, but I suggest that the court can speak for itself," was Thorp's cool reply. "The question should have elicited an answer as to the entire service, possibly in other commands, on the part of the witness; and he replies only as to C troop."

"He has given the exact information I desired," said Lawler, hastily, "and all my question was intended to cover. I protest against interference with my witnesses."

Bang! came old Grace's sword-hilt on the table.

"It is three o'clock, Mr. Judge-Advocate, and the court will adjourn."

Lawler drew a long breath, and glanced triumphantly at Thorp.

But, however little the first day brought forth, the second in no wise lacked sensation. Welsh and Mr. Levi Schönberg, in terms most emphatic, had described the assault upon the principal witness; both declared that with brutal violence Welsh had been dragged forth from the bar-room and then kicked and cuffed all the way to the guard-house; both denied the faintest provocation or excuse; and then, amid oppressive stillness, Mr. Schönberg had described his connection with the trader's establishment six years before, and his knowledge of the pecuniary dealings of the accused. In positive terms he asserted that old Mr. Braine had lent the accused sums aggregating six hundred dollars at different times, and that he had frequently and vainly importuned him, in letters written by Schönberg, for payment, had been ignored, and that finally, when he, after the accused returned to the post, strove to collect the amount, he, the witness, was met with curt refusal, denials of all indebtedness, and finally with threats and assault. Nothing much more connected could well be imagined. Both men were positive and precise as to facts and dates, and both when cross-examined by the accused stuck stoutly and positively to their versions. Another witness was Mrs. Schönberg that was and Mrs. Braine that had been, and her testimony, though by no means truculent or positive, was largely in support of that of her Jewish spouse. She was sure of the loans to Hearn; sure he had never repaid them; sure that Braine had directed them placed upon the books, and had frequently spoken

to her of them, because she thought that he was too open-handed and credulous, and had told him so.

When court adjourned at three P.M. on the second day the case had gone dead against Hearn, and Colonel Grace gravely inquired if he could not procure counsel even now; it might still be allowed. But Hearn quietly shook his head. Wednesday morning was to have brought the redoubtable Mr. Abrams to the scene to aid the case for the prosecution, but Colonel Lawler was compelled to say that the witness was not forthcoming, and had not even answered telegrams sent him. There was some quiet grinning at the reporters' table, and old Kenyon breathed a sigh as he bent over and whispered to Brodie,—

"D—n that fellow! He never meant to come, and Lawler knows it. Cross-examination would have broken him all up."

But two other civilians were produced, who claimed to be old friends of the late trader, and one of these testified that the week before his death Mr. Braine had declared that Hearn had refused to repay the money and he regarded it as good as lost. Hearn protested against this as "hearsay" and not testimony under oath. Lawler vowed it was material and confirmatory, and the court was cleared, to the utter indignation of the correspondents thus compelled to quit the room with the common herd. Thrice again this happened during the day, and people grew disgusted, many of them leaving; but those who remained, including the officers, could see no earthly hope for Hearn. Everything had been as conclusively proved as such witnesses could establish matters, and the only chance lay in the impeachment of their testimony.

It was nearly three o'clock on Wednesday when Lawler said that if the other witness, Mr. Abrams, did not put in an appearance he would rest the case for the prosecution. Colonel Maitland inquired why the books of the late post trader had not been produced in court in support of Schönberg's testimony, and Lawler promptly responded that they were too bulky to be appended to the record, were property of the estate, and he had not considered them necessary. However, if the court insisted—— And the court did. Schönberg was directed to bring his books at ten o'clock the next day.

That evening the party gathered on Lane's piazza was very silent and sad. Kenyon had been there awhile, and gone away with bowed head and thoughtful eyes. The defence, of course, had not begun. *There would be no* difficulty in utterly defeating the charge of assault

upon the soldier Welsh; but what worried one and all was the testimony of Schönberg and Braine's relict. If that held good with the court, then Hearn had been guilty of disgraceful conduct in stating orally and in writing that he had long since paid those debts. There could be no sentence but dismissal. Hearn had shut himself up in his room. That day had brought a long letter from his father, and it was this he was studying, sore at heart, when Kenyon entered.

"You haven't slept a wink for two nights, lad, and I know it," said the major, anxiously, as he studied the worn face of his friend. "I'm going to call Ingersoll in to prescribe for you." And, despite Hearn's protest, the orderly was sent for the post surgeon.

Meantime, with many emphatic nods and "humphs," Kenyon read the long, long letter which, without a word, Hearn had placed in his hand, finishing it at last, going over several pages, and finally sighing deeply as he refolded it:

"It is just what I feared, my boy; it is just what I feared. Still, I'm glad he didn't look upon it as your mother thought he would. Wonder what she thought of my letter—— Hello, here's Ingersoll now."

"I was at the hospital with Brent," said the medical man, in some haste, "and had to go to Lane's first."

"No one ill at Lane's, I hope?" spoke Kenyon, as Hearn's face was suddenly uplifted. "I've just come from there."

"Oh, no, no; but Miss Marshall and Mrs. Lane have been going to see Brent every afternoon, and this evening he asked me to take a message over there. He wanted to see them to-night, but I had to say no; he's too feverish. They were much concerned to hear I had been called in to see you, Hearn, and I promised to come back at once and let them know how you were."

A brief examination showed the skilled practitioner the extent of Hearn's malady, and he insisted on his coming out. He would have added, "over to Lane's piazza," but members of the court were calling there, and it would hardly be the proper thing. Returning thither, however, he found the gentlemen gone and Colonel Lawler just seating himself for a social call.

"Nothing serious," he murmured to the ladies, as he took a chair, and in low tone began chatting with the Whartons. It was Lawler's voice that broke the stillness; and Lawler, full of his profession, could talk nothing but "shop."

"I could not but observe your presence in the court-room, ladies, even among the host of curious spectators. And how does a military court impress you, Miss Marshall, now that you have seen it?"

"I can tell you better when I have seen it all, colonel. Thus far we've had nothing but the prosecution. It will seem less one-sided after the defence."

"Ah, that, I fear, will hardly amount to anything. The young man has been very ill advised,—very. Possibly you heard that I had offered him my services,—that is, any in my power to render,—and that he had refused?"

Miss Marshall simply looked at the colonel a moment, making no reply. Finally,—

"May I ask what services you could render him? I thought the prosecution was your specialty."

"Oh, it is, certainly; that is my bounden duty. Still, if I knew what evidence he had to offer,—what witnesses he meant to call,—any experienced lawyer could tell him how best to conduct the case."

Miss Marshall fairly laughed:

"That strikes me as one of the most unique ideas I ever colonel. If you belonged, we will say, to the combatant force army, and had a position to defend, would you detail your plan fence to the adversary?"

"My dear young lady, you totally misapprehend the peculiar mechanism of our system. After having finished the government's side, then I am free to assist the accused."

"And the accused, as I understand it, is free to 'play it alone,' as we do in euchre. Now, do you know, I think I would prefer that course to having an advocate who was more than half an opposer?"

"Well, certainly, Miss Marshall, you cannot congratulate the accused on his conduct of the case thus far. He would have stood better with the court at this minute if he had taken my advice, as he wouldn't. Then I had only one course to pursue."

"Doesn't that look just a wee bit as though he were being prosecuted for declining eminent legal assistance rather than for alleged misconduct?"

Lawler flushed, and again glanced sharply from under his sandy brows and out of the corners of his twinkling eyes.

"You have a sharp tongue, young lady," he said, "but I presume *your wit is* made to match it. It is a pity they could not be brought

ıto requisition in defence of your friend before the court itself. You annot influence me." And he laughed loudly, and glanced around as nough in triumph.

"'Faith, Lawler, it's just as lucky for you that Miss Marshall isn't ounsel for the accused. You'll get knocked endwise when it comes to he defence, anyhow," said the doctor.

"You think so, do you? Well, well, we'll see; we'll see."

The gate had opened, and an orderly entered.

"A telegram for the commanding officer," he said.

Kenyon took the brown envelope, tore it open, and stepped to the hall door-way, where the light would fall upon the page. A gleam of sudden satisfaction shot across his face, and he turned eagerly toward Miss Marshall, whose dark eyes had followed him. "Come," he signalled; and she rose and went to him.

"Read this," he said, in low tones, as he thrust the paper into her hand and sauntered back to his chair. "I can trust you to keep a secret."

Lawler gazed after her with unmistakable curiosity, studying her face as she read, then turned and looked at Kenyon, who was ostentatiously humming the air Miss Wharton had just begun playing on he piano. What did it mean? Was his entertainer in league with his girl who so dared him? Mrs. Lane strove to cover her friend's omewhat abrupt quitting of the group by a timely word or two, but er question failed to catch the lawyer's ears. In a minute Georgia 'as back, had dropped the despatch over Kenyon's burly shoulder with ıe brief whispered word, "Splendid," and then almost laughingly ırned on the judge-advocate.

"And now tell me, colonel, isn't there such a thing as impeaching ıe credibility of witnesses?"

"Oh, I suppose so in certain cases; but what has that to do with ıine?"

"Yours? Well, one would hardly think your witnesses assailable, ? course; but even truthful men, you know, are sometimes mistaken."

"Books and figures don't lie, Miss Marshall. You forget the ooks."

"Oh, true! I forgot the books. And Mr. Schönberg was bookeeper, too."

XV.

Ten o'clock had come; so had the court; so had the public, in numbers largely increased. In Central City it was generally understood that on this day the proceedings would be brought to a close. The case for the government would be concluded by the evidence of Mr. Abrams,—when he arrived,—and by the exhibition of the books of the late concern of Braine & Co. The defence really had not a leg to stand on. Everybody in the enterprising community had been assured of this fact by the repeated assertions of Mr. Schönberg and the oracular announcements of the press; and it was the popular belief that all the unfortunate officer could do would be to assail the integrity of the witnesses, which attempt would be utterly overthrown by the vigilant prosecutor, who would then conclude by a scathing review of the evidence, after which the court would promptly adjudge him guilty and sentence him to be stripped of his uniform and drummed out forthwith. Probably half the populace that thronged the court-room that bright June morning fully expected before returning to their homes to see an army lieutenant degraded of his rank and thrust forth from the reservation at the points of the bayonets of the garrison. Dozens there were who knew better; but a community reared on the pap of sensationalism as supplied by the modern press could not accept the mild and moderate views of the minority as a possibility.

"Ten-fifteen," said old Grace, thrusting his watch back into the breast of his hot uniform coat, and looking about in some impatience. "What keeps Lawler?"

"Waiting for that Jew with his books. I believe he's somewhere in that crowd on the piazza. They say his newspaper man hasn't turned up yet; but I wish you would call the court to order and give him a rap for delaying matters."

"Ah! another 'bus-load from town," said the president, as there entered at the moment a party of ladies, escorted by the sandy-haired judge-advocate himself. All around the room the benches were occupied, but behind this party came three or four soldiers carrying chairs, and, much to the disgust of Mrs. Brodie and Mrs. Graves, who had obtained, with a party of their friends, the front row nearest the table of the accused, these chairs were planted before them, and their view was cut off by the households of some of the prominent business-men of Central City. So closely did they surround Mr. Hearn that he drew his seat a trifle nearer to that of the judge-advocate.

There was a little more space on the other side of the table, where the correspondents were, but they seemed to prefer not to crowd these gentlemen, and nobody, of course, would think of intruding between them and the court. It was almost half-after ten when a soldier made his way through the throng, and, saluting Lawler, said something in a low tone, at which the judge-advocate went over and whispered to Grace. A moment later the burly form of Major Kenyon was seen shouldering a way through the court-room, while Dr. Ingersoll's spectacled face appeared just behind him. Escorted by these gentlemen came Mrs. Lane, fresh, smiling, nodding cheerily to acquaintances in the court and around the room, looking cool and radiant in a spring costume which attracted the instant attention of the ladies and diverted their eyes from Miss Marshall, whose simple but inexpensive toilet was hardly worthy their glance, while to the grosser masculine understanding it was every whit as lovely as that of her friend and hostess. Behind them all came Sam, with four folding chairs, and, there being no other place available, the major promptly plumped them down in front of Lawler's friends and motioned his party to seats. Georgia Marshall's color deepened, as any one who looked might see, for the chair to which she was assigned was so close to that of Hearn that by simply putting forth her hand she could have touched his sleeve.

His back was to the door, and he had not seen them enter, yet at the perceptible hush that fell upon the chatter of the feminine spectators he knew who must be coming, and his pale face brightened with a sudden smile as, turning, he saw her almost at his elbow. Mrs. Lane nodded thrice, looking brightly and affectionately in his eyes, before she took her seat, just as though her efforts were to show all the throng that the women of the army held him guiltless. But Georgia Marshall's eyes were hidden for a moment behind their drooping lids. It was not until after she was seated, and a glance around had told her that the gaze of all women was still on the lovely toilet that Mabel wore, that she stole a sudden look at him and met the brave light in his wan face.

"Good-morning," he whispered. "I had not looked for anything half as good as this,—to have you here so near me."

"It was my fault we were late; they were waiting for me. I—I had been to the hospital with Dr. Ingersoll—— There's so much to tell you."

"Has *any further* news come?"

"Not that. Something else,—something better. Don't you see how excited the major is?"

And indeed old Kenyon seemed fairly aglow. His eyes were snapping; his face was twitching and redder than ever. He was standing at that moment, searching all the windows with keen glance and looking along the faces of the soldiers who had gathered on all sides of the piazza without. Suddenly he seemed to see the features for which he was so eagerly looking, and with a quick gesture he called an orderly to his side and hastily scribbled these words on a piece of paper: "That third window on the west. Get around there, and don't let him out of your sight this day."

"Give that to the provost-sergeant," he said. And the orderly disappeared.

Then came the voice of Colonel Grace impatiently demanding of the judge-advocate that he proceed, and Lawler, who had been fidgeting uneasily, arose:

"May it please the court, the witness Abrams has still failed to respond; but the evidence of the other witnesses has been so conclusive that I feel that I need not detain the court. All that now remains is to examine the books of the late post trader, which, as you have demanded, are here in my possession."

"The court will come to order," said Grace, loudly.

A hush fell on the assembled throng, and all eyes were on the judge-advocate, who was busily unwrapping the package which he produced from the folds of the linen duster he had, with apparent carelessness, thrown upon his chair. Two ordinary-looking, leather-bound volumes presently appeared, which he proceeded to lay before Colonel Grace:

"I now have the honor to submit for the examination of the court such books of the former post trader as bear upon this case. In them will appear the entries of the various amounts advanced by him to the accused, with their dates, etc., and, just as stated by the witness Schönberg, it will be seen that no payments, beyond a few trifling sums, have been recorded. The amount of the indebtedness as claimed in the specifications will be found to agree with the figures."

As he spoke, Lawler had opened the volumes at points indicated by slips of paper and spread them upon the table. Grace adjusted his *eye-glasses* and conned over one of the books, while Maitland took the *second.* The other members of the court silently awaited their turn.

"I do not profess to be an expert at book-keeping," said Maitland, resently; "but do I understand the judge-advocate to say that the ritness Schönberg swears that these entries are correct?"

Lawler briskly turned over the leaves of the record before him.

"Here are his very words," he said. "'I myself made entries for he years '83 and '84, both in the day-book and in the ledger. I kept ll Mr. Braine's books. He gave me the items just as they occurred, nd these entries were made by me at the different dates in those years ust as they were directed by him.'"

"Oh, yes, yes: I remember," said the colonel. "I suppose it is all ect. Possibly other members of the court can tell more about this usiness than I can." And he passed the book down the table.

"Nothing could be more confirmatory of Schönberg's statements," aid the judge-advocate, loudly. "One has only to look at these pages. ou can see that different ink, different pens, have been used here,— *rimâ facie* evidence of their having been entered at totally different imes, instead of being jotted down at once, as might be claimed by the efence but for this significant fact." And Lawler looked triumphantly bout the room, ending with a glance at the little group that was near Iearn's table.

Miss Marshall was leaning forward, her dark eyes eagerly scanning he faces of the members of the court, and watching the books as they assed from hand to hand. Hearn, pale and patient, seemed waiting or the court to finish before asking that he, too, be permitted to exam- ne the books.

"Do you suppose you could get them one moment?" whispered Iiss Marshall to the major, who was sitting at her left. "I had to tudy books and book-keeping once."

"I'll try," whispered Kenyon. "Hearn will, anyhow."

It was some time before they reached the foot of the table. Cap- ain Thorp and his next neighbor spent several minutes in studying the lates and figures, and at last handed them successively to the junior nember. As soon as this gentleman had finished his scrutiny of the irst, Lieutenant Hearn held forth his hand:

"I presume I may be permitted to examine these exhibits?"

"I submit to the court that the accused has had frequent oppor- unity any time these last three months to examine these books, that he as been importuned, even, to do so, time and again, and has contemp- uously refused. In view of these facts, his anxiety to see them now

strikes me as an assumption." Lawler's manner was loud and truculent. He knew he was making a point.

"Assumption or not," said the president, coolly, as Hearn's face flushed hotly under the sting, "it is the undoubted right of the accused to see any exhibit produced in court."

"I feel bound, then, to prevent their being improperly dealt with while in his hands," said Lawler, hanging on to his volumes and bent on making the scene as effective as possible.

"I will take all responsibility, sir. You may be sure the accused will not injure them," was Grace's prompt and indignant rejoinder.

And so, having interfered as long as possible, the lawyer grudgingly handed the book to Mr. Hearn, ostentatiously holding it open so that all near at hand could see the array of items and figures charged against him. In doing so he even raised the volume to the level of his own shoulder, and the leaf flapped lazily open until it stood in bold relief.

Never moving from her seat, Miss Marshall, with glowing eyes and compressed lips, had silently noted every word and motion. She was bending forward eagerly, as though striving at a distance of six or seven feet to decipher the writing on the page thus glaringly exhibited. When finally Lawler laid it on the table and Mr. Hearn began slowly studying the page, she still retained her position. Forgetful, apparently, of everything around her, the young girl was now so near that she could have touched the table at which sat the accused soldier.

Studying with pained, troubled face, Mr. Hearn at last began slowly turning over the pages and looking at the headings of the other accounts. There was something which he evidently desired to satisfy himself about, yet everything looked straight and plausible. Again bent on taking every opportunity to score a point against the accused, Lawler suddenly arose:

"I submit again, if the court will but hear me, that, while the accused has been accorded the privilege of examining his long-neglected account, he has no right whatever to pry into the affairs of other officers. I maintain that he should be compelled to confine his attention to his own page: there is quite enough there."

Kenyon suddenly felt a slim white hand gripping his wrist like a vice. Hearn was just turning down a page after briefly scanning the dates, but a rustle at his side attracted his attention. To his amazement, Miss Marshall had bent forward out of her chair and was eagerly motioning and whispering to him:

"Again! Let me see through that page again."

The court was discussing at the instant the question raised by awler. Maitland and Thorp protested that Hearn had a right to ompare other accounts with his own if he suspected fraud of any kind. Iearn himself, with throbbing heart, could only see and hear her.)bedient to her signal, he again raised the leaf, and would have turned he book, so that she could read it right side up, but with imperious esture she forbade.

"Hold it as it is," she signalled, as, still bending low, she seemed tudying every line of the paper thus vertically placed between her nd the sunshine flooding in at the open barrack window.

"Quick, now! More! more!" she motioned. And, wondering, ie turned several pages, holding each a moment or two. But she hook her head impatiently and signalled, "Go on!" until in succession alf a dozen leaves were turned; then, with eager light in her eyes, gain she held up a warning hand, and the page was stopped.

"Very well, then," Lawler was saying at this moment, with sarastic emphasis. "On the principle that misery loves company, I uppose we must accord him the privilege of viewing the accounts of is fellow-debtors." And, with this fresh piece of civil legal practice n his lips, the judge-advocate turned to the group on his left and topped short in amaze.

Hearn, utterly lost to what was going on, was gazing with all his yes at Miss Marshall, who, flushed, eager, almost radiant, once more as leaning back in her chair, but signalling to close the book. It as Kenyon now who was half rising and whispering sudden impetuus words to Hearn.

For a moment Lawler knew not what to think or say. Something old him that the cause he represented was in peril. A sense of disaster ashed upon him.

"At least the accused will have the decency to refrain from exhibitig officers' private accounts to the public," he said, with sudden return o his old manner, "and, if he be through with the examination, return hese exhibits to me, that I may close the case,—unless, perhaps, he esires to offer something further upon this subject."

Miss Marshall's fingers were twisting a tiny slip on which she had urriedly pencilled a word or two. One instant more, and it was with Iearn. She had bent forward to pick up a fluttering scrap of paper; er deft fingers had but for the instant touched his drooping hand.

Opening it, he read, "Recall Schönberg instantly." Surprised, he glanced at her, but purposely she had averted her eyes. Kenyon was vehemently nodding.

"I must ask that Mr. Schönberg be recalled," said Hearn. "There is new matter here, upon which I need to question him."

"The accused has already had opportunity to cross-examine the witness, and has no further right," said Lawler.

"I repeat that there is new matter before the court in the introduction of these exhibits, on which I have a perfect right to question," replied Hearn.

"It is simply delaying matters," persisted Lawler. "When the accused said he had no further questions to ask, yesterday, I excused the witness, and he is now miles away, and cannot be had until morning, if he can then."

"The man is not fifty feet away at this moment," said Kenyon, with sharp emphasis and a voice that rang through the room.

"When did the gentleman become counsel in this case, I beg to know?" sneered the judge-advocate. "I protest against this disorder and interference with the court."

"Major Kenyon gives us important information, Colonel Lawler," said Grace, "and if the man is here the court desires that he be recalled at once."

Lawler reddened with wrath. "If you know where he is, call him in," said he to Kenyon. And all eyes were turned to the door, where presently, escorted by the orderly of the court, Mr. Schönberg appeared, hat in hand, bowing profusely and politely to the court, yet looking, as Mr. Martin expressed it, "rather pasty about the gills." He was scuttling down the back stairs when headed off by the provost-sergeant. He had doubtless heard the summons for his recall, and had hoped to get out of the way. All eyes but Hearn's and Kenyon's, Mabel Lane's and Georgia's, were upon him. With lightning speed the latter was writing a little note, and this, too, a moment later, was in the young lieutenant's hand. He read it. A wild light of wonderment and incredulity leaped into his face. He hastily raised the volume between him and the opposite window, held a leaf between him and the sunshine, gazed quickly and earnestly, and then, laying the book once more on the table, turned with swimming eyes and looked full upon her, his lips quivering, his face aglow with joy, hope, gratitude, and a fervor of admiration and worship no woman on earth could fail

to see; but Georgia's downcast face was hidden; she had drawn her fan like Spartan shield between her glowing cheek and the kindling eyes she dared not meet.

It was Lawler's rasping voice that recalled the young soldier to his senses:

"Well, sir, the witness is here."

There was a silence as of solitude in the great heated room. Obedient to the clumsy formality of a military court, Mr. Hearn slowly wrote his question on a slip of paper and handed it to the judge-advocate: the latter read it, threw it down, and pettishly exclaimed,—

"This is mere waste of valuable time, I say. The witness has practically answered this all before."

"What is the question?" asked the president.

"The accused asks the witness to state to the court what reason he has for being so positive about the time these entries were made. So long as my witness *is* positive, I conceive it to be no affair of the defence why or how he is."

"Oh, I see no especial object in the question," said Grace, "yet there is no impropriety in asking it. At all events, I am entirely willing to bear the responsibility. The witness will answer."

Could he but have seen the flash of gratitude in Miss Marshall's eyes! It was only a flash. Almost instantly again they were fixed on the pudgy features of the witness.

"Why, certainly, gentlemen, I can answer. Mr. Braine died in the spring of '85, and couldn't have told me to make those entries after he was dead, could he? No. They were made, just as I said, in the winter of '83 and during the year of '84, just when he told me to make them."

"Are you satisfied?" asked the judge-advocate, turning sharply to Hearn.

"One moment," answered that young gentleman, placidly, as his pencil rapidly copied another question on the slip before him. Finishing this, he arose. "I beg to ask the especial attention of the court to this question," he said.

There fell a hush as of death upon the throng. With parted lips Georgia Marshall again bent eagerly forward until she could see the Jew's twitching face. Schönberg turned a shade paler and glanced half appealingly up at the lawyer, who, with a sneer of assumed contempt, held forth his hand for the slip. But Hearn looked straight into

Lawler's eyes. The judge-advocate took the paper, turned it carelessly over, elevated his nose with apparent indifference, leaned back in his chair, glanced at it,—started.

"Let me see that book," he exclaimed, as he sprang to his feet, holding forth an eager hand.

"Presently, sir," answered Hearn, holding the volume behind him. "Kindly put the question first."

"Don't let that book go!" whispered Miss Marshall, hastily, her words addressed to Kenyon, yet meant for and heard by Hearn. Mabel Lane's face was flushing with excitement. Every eye in the room was intent on the scene.

"What is the question, Mr. Judge-Advocate?" sharply inquired Colonel Grace. "Why do you seek to suppress it?"

"I protest against the insinuation, sir. I simply seek to protect an honest man from insult. I ask the accused for a book that I may satisfy myself he has reason for a question otherwise unjustifiable."

"Mr. President, I demand the question as a right!" exclaimed Hearn, in tones thrilling with excitement and ringing through the court. "The witness has sworn he made these entries in '83 and '84. Look, gentlemen, look at this page, one and all, and compel the answer."

He sprang forward and laid the book in Grace's hand:

"Hold it to the light, sir. Look at the water-mark. I demand an answer to my question."

Trembling with emotion, his blue eyes ablaze, his fingers working nervously, the young soldier towered above the heads of the court. Every breath in all the great room seemed hushed, though hearts beat and hammered like mad. All eyes were on Grace now, as he adjusted his glasses, held the page aloft, and scrutinized the paper. Then, with a quick gleam in his sharp old eyes, he beckoned excitedly to Maitland, pointed with his forefinger to the waving lines of the water-marks, and dropped the book upon the table, his finger between the leaves, a threatening frown on his brow.

"Put the question, Mr. Judge-Advocate," his stern voice was heard through the room.—"And you, sir, answer."

Lawler hesitated one minute, glancing dubiously around. Then, as though seeing the hopelessness of resistance, he read, in accents that trembled despite his efforts, these words:

"How was it possible for you to write in '83 and '84 on paper that *was not manu*factured until two years afterward?"

XVI.

When, half an hour later, Colonel Lawler announced that, in view f circumstances to which the court appeared to attach so much signifiance, he would rest the case for the prosecution, he had, despite every ffort, and the professional bravado assumed for such occasions, all the ir of a whipped man. For half a minute after hearing that stunning uestion Mr. Schönberg had sat glaring at the judge-advocate, his eyes rotruding, his mouth wide open, his face ghastly white. Then he nopped his forehead, recalled to himself by Grace's sharp tones, as the resident again demanded answer, and faltered out,—

"I ton't understand the question."

"You are called upon to explain to this court how it was possible or you to have made those entries in '83 and '84, as you have solemnly worn you did, when the paper itself was not made until 1886," hundered Grace; "and the court is waiting for your answer."

"The paper vasn't made until 1886?" faltered Schönberg.

"No, sir!" fairly shouted the wrathful old soldier in the president's hair. "No, sir! You failed to study the water-marks. Here it is epeated on a score of these leaves: 'Sconset Valley Mills, 1886.' I ay, explain this if you can."

"I ton't know anything about that," muttered the Jew at last, ulping down the big lump that arose in his throat. "I know when I ade those entries, anyhow."

But the whole roomful could see that the wretch was only lying,— esperately lying. The pencils of the correspondents were flying over eir blocks with furious speed. One excited ambassador of the press ad already made a lunge through the crowd for the door-way.

"Mr. Judge-Advocate," said the president, at last, "I fancy you an now excuse your witness from further attendance. Stop, though.— Iave you anything else you would wish to ask, Mr. Hearn?" And ow his manner was all courtesy.

"Not a word, sir," was the smiling answer. "I shall beg to ubmit the list of my witnesses in a few moments."

People seemed to draw aside and make a wide lane for the wretched Iebrew and his crest-fallen counsellor, as the latter led his unscrupuous witness to the outer gallery, whither Lawler said he desired to etire for a moment's consultation. So entire had been the confidence

of the mass of the people in the guilt of the officer that Schönberg's shady reputation had not sufficed to warn them of the possibilities in the case. But among educated and better-informed people present there broke forth suddenly, after a moment's breathless silence, a ripple of applause that speedily swelled into a joyous burst of hand-clapping which was taken up all over the room, and for a moment, mingled with angry hisses on the part of a few pronounced socialists in the throng, who were furious at the sudden turn in favor of the hated official class, the clamor was unchecked. Stern as he was, old Grace could not deny the audience the right of such a reaction. Then he rapped for order.

"You are not ready, I presume, to proceed with your defence?" said Lawler, a moment after, as he re-entered the room and glanced nervously around. All his airy, confident manner was gone. He looked almost dazed.

"Certainly," was the prompt reply. "Have the goodness to call in Private Welsh."

"May it please the court," said Lawler, "I submit that the accused should furnish the list of witnesses he desires to summon, in order that it may be determined for what purpose they are called, and whether the expense will be justified," said Lawler, in response. "And as for Welsh, I maintain that that unfortunate trooper has already suffered too much at the hands of the accused to warrant his being subjected to further ignominy, as he would be if the court allowed such treatment as was accorded my last witness."

"If he is at all like your last witness, Colonel Lawler, ignominy will not inaptly express the idea," was Grace's sarcastic response; whereat "an audible grin" spread over the room.

"Do you wish to summon witnesses from abroad, Mr. Hearn?"

"Not one, sir. Every man I need will be at the post by one o'clock this afternoon; and, except Welsh, who is understood to be under the especial charge of the judge-advocate and amenable to orders from nobody else, I will not trouble the court to call on anybody: the others will be glad to come."

Lawler shook his head and looked dissatisfied. If he could only know the men whom the defence was introducing and could find out what they meant to testify, it might be still in his power to avert at least public catastrophe. Shrewd enough to see the evident antagonism he had created, and knowing that matters were going topsy-turvy at the moment, he bethought him of a ruse by which he could get rid of the crowd:

"I beg the indulgence of the court. I have allowed the case for the prosecution to rest rather than infringe longer on time that is so valuable, but I find myself unable to proceed at this moment, and I beg that you take a recess until two P.M."

The court demurred. It was utterly adverse to a recess. Hearn's witnesses were all ready to proceed,—four or five, at least.

"What is the need?" asked Thorp and Maitland, neither of whom felt like giving Lawler an inch of leeway. But courtesy to the staff-officer of the division commander prevailed.

It was barely eleven o'clock when the throng came pouring forth from the court-room, and Lawler hoped that, rather than wait three hours, the mass of the people would depart. But his hopes were vain. If anything, the number seemed augmented. The noon train brought a couple of car-loads from the eastward towns. It also brought a sergeant and private of infantry escorting a dilapidated-looking party in shabby civilian dress whom old Kenyon, the adjutant, and a file of the post-guard were at the station to meet. The stranger was bundled into an ambulance and trotted up to the guard-house, into which he slouched with hanging head and an air of general dejection; and while the men were at their soldier dinner Kenyon was busily interviewing his tough-looking prisoner, a squad of excited newspaper men, meantime, kicking their heels outside and raging at the military assumption which gave the post commander precedence over the press. The word had gone out all over the crowded garrison that the escaped prisoner Goss was recaptured, and the commanding officer's orderly had been rushed with a note to the provost-sergeant.

"You bet he'll not get away," muttered this veteran of Brodie's company, as he glanced along the lively mess-room, where the big bowls of bean soup were being emptied by rare soldier appetites. "You bet he don't, unless he can carry a cart-load of lead in him."

Twenty minutes after, Corporal Greene of the guard came to the door-way and sung out,—

"Say, fellers, who do you think's captured and brought back? Trooper Goss, begad, the bosom friend of the patriotic Welsh."

And Welsh dropped his spoon and his eyes and turned a dirty yellow. He essayed presently to quit the table, but the old sergeant bent over him:

"Finish yer dinner, me buck. Don't let eagerness to see yer friend *spoil yer appetite.* You can't see him, anyway, till he has

given his testimony before the court; and they'll want you, too, Welsh, me jewel, and I'm charged not to lose you,—d'ye mind that, Welsh?—and I never lose anything but an occasional slice of me temper. Ate yer dinner, like the high-spirited American ye are, now." But Welsh's appetite was gone.

The court-room was crowded to suffocation that afternoon when, sharp at two o'clock, Colonel Grace rapped for order:

"I suppose you are ready now, Colonel Lawler? Call in the first witness."

Lawler looked resigned, even martyred. The court had come back from luncheon at the Lanes' in high spirits. The ladies again sat close to Hearn's table. Private Goss, with untrimmed beard and an air of general dilapidation, was sworn by the judge-advocate, gave his name, rank, regiment, etc., and responded, in answer to Lawler's question, that he did know the accused very well.

"What do you want to ask the witness?" said Lawler, in a tone as much as to say, What *could* you ask that would be of any earthly account?

"State where and how long you have known Private Welsh, C troop, Eleventh Cavalry," were the words on the pencilled slip, and Lawler read them grudgingly.

"I've known him six or eight years. Knew him when he enlisted in the Twenty-Third, where he went by the name of Webster. Served with him at Fort Wayne until he got a 'bobtail' discharge, and when I got mine I went to his home in Ohio and hunted him up. He owed me money, but he was no good,—couldn't pay it. His people wouldn't do anything more for him. He was Mrs. Blauvelt's nephew, but she had about got tired of trying to support him, so we came away and enlisted again, in the cavalry service this time, and then he got things fixed to go into Blauvelt's troop for both of us."

"What was your reason for deserting here while awaiting trial?" was the next question.

"Well, both Welsh and Schönberg told me I was bound to be convicted. Everything pointed to my being Corporal Brent's slugger, though I swear to God I never left the barracks that night. They said if I didn't get away before the court tried me I might get several years in State's prison at hard labor, and worse still if he didn't recover. *Welsh and Schönberg* both said that there was no show for me, the *evidence was so* clear, even to the red pepper in the pockets. Some

coundrel put it there, and wore my things, too. Welsh got put into he guard-room, purposely, opposite my cell, and threw a stone with a tring through the grating, and I hauled on it and got a letter from iim and Schönberg telling me how to escape. There were saws and allow in the package I drew in, and Schönberg was down in the ottom with a buggy after I got out, and he drove me nearly all night round by way of Barclay to the other road, and sent me by rail to Omaha, where he promised that plenty of money would come to me; but io money came at all, and I was recognized and arrested by the police."

"Had you any idea that there were other reasons for getting you to lesert than the one given?"

Lawler bounced up and objected to both question and answer; but oth were ordered recorded.

"I hadn't—then," was the sullen reply: "I'm not so sure now. That Jew got me to go because I accused him of being a receiver of olen property. It was him Welsh gave the papers he took from the eutenant's desk in Captain Blauvelt's quarters. I went there with im one night after taps when the lieutenant was officer of the guard, nd Schönberg gave Welsh ten dollars and me five to keep mum. After iat Welsh began to run with Schönberg entirely and turn against me, nd it was through him that I was always getting into trouble."

In vain Lawler propounded questions tending to show his witness, ius assailed, in a better light; but the more he examined the more amaging was Goss's testimony. At last the witness slouched out nder escort of a sentinel.

But a greater sensation still was awaiting the patient listeners in ie court-room. The next man to enter, leaning heavily on the arm f the hospital steward, and accompanied by Dr. Ingersoll, was Corporal Brent, looking white and feeble, but very calm and self-possessed.

"Give your full name, rank, and regiment," said the judge-advocate, ithout looking up.

"The name under which I enlisted is Malcolm Brent, corporal ompany C, —th Infantry."

"The court will note, I trust, the singular character of the witnesses itroduced by the accused," said Lawler, promptly. "The last, by his wn admission, is a thief and a deserter whom Welsh very properly ssayed to cut loose from on discovering his real character; and now ve have a second who plainly intimates that the name he gives is not is own."

"It is the one by which he is known to military law all the same, Colonel Lawler. Please to proceed," said Colonel Grace, testily.

"You know the accused, I presume, or he would not have called upon you?" was Lawler's snapping query of the witness.

"Only as a soldier knows an officer whom he has every reason to respect. I have never exchanged a word with the gentleman, but I recognize him as Lieutenant Hearn, of the Eleventh Cavalry."

Again there was a ripple of applause in the crowded court, which brought Lawler, angry and protesting, to his feet. Silence restored, he presently read aloud the next question from a slip handed him by Mr. Hearn, which he slowly pasted on the sheet before him:

"What do you know with regard to the amounts charged against the accused on the books presented before this court and alleged to be unpaid?"

"I know that they were paid long ago. I heard the story of the whole transaction from the lips of Captain Rawlins himself."

"Hearsay evidence," promptly interrupted the judge-advocate, rapping on the table.

"But Schönberg's written acknowledgment and this letter of Captain Rawlins will not be so considered," answered the witness, respectfully, and, bending forward, he placed on the judge-advocate's table a little package of papers. The court-room was hushed. Even the pencils of the correspondents were arrested. Every eye in all the throng was on the pale face of the young corporal. Members of the court had whirled around in their chairs, so as to look full upon the new witness. Old Kenyon, with lifted spectacles, brimming over with eagerness and excitement, was fidgeting on his chair. Pretty Mrs. Lane, all smiles, was keeping her fan in lively yet noiseless play. Georgia Marshall's heavily-fringed lids were drooping over her downcast eyes; but the soft, summer fabric of her dress rose and fell upon her bosom like the billows of an unquiet sea. She was seated where every word of the witness could reach her ears, but no longer so near the little table where sat the calm young soldier whose trial had nearly reached an end. There was no longer need of counsel for the accused; yet his eyes, time and again, glanced yearningly at her.

Lawler was the first to speak. He dandled the papers contemptuously as he glanced them over:

"These are of no earthly account,—mere forgeries, possibly. One *only purports to* be a duplicate, anyhow."

"Duplicate of what, sir? The court will be glad to look at those papers when you are through with them," said Colonel Grace.

"I object to their introduction as evidence, in any event, and protest against their admission here. What possible business can a corporal of infantry be having with the private papers of a deceased officer, anyway?—Where did you know the late Captain Rawlins,—even supposing that he did write that letter?"

"Any question on that score the court may choose to ask I will answer," was the reply, with quiet self-possession. "But I can swear to the genuineness of both papers."

Captain Thorp had already possessed himself of the duplicate receipt, and, after a brief glance, tossed it over to the opposite member.

"Schönberg, without a doubt," he whispered.

Meantime, old Grace had received and was conning over the other, which he suddenly lowered and looked in amaze at the calm face of the witness, then handed it to Maitland, who read, started, and gazed too.

"I know this hand, sir. I know it as that of an old and valued friend," said Maitland, with lips that quivered perceptibly. "I could almost swear to its genuineness myself. It is probably one of the last letters the dear old fellow ever wrote, and it is to his boy at college. Here, Thorp, you read it aloud." And, though Lawler would have protested, protest was useless. Thorp arose, clicking his heels together as though on drill, and, in a voice that was audible all over the big room, read:

"FORT GRAHAM, NEW MEXICO, June 14, 188–.

"MY DEAR MALCOLM,—

"It seems hardly possible that three weeks ago I was with you under the elms of the old campus, listening to college glees and seeing the glad faces of your class-mates,—as manly a set of young fellows as it was ever my lot to meet,—and now here I am again in harness under a blazing sun, with arid, sandy wastes on every side, and not a leaf that is not shrivelled by the fierce rays. I find the old post much as I left it; but I go over to San Carlos in a day or two on court-martial duty, and so am writing my letters to-night.

"In the first place, you will be glad to know that the gold leaves are in sight. If all goes well, I shall become major of the Seventh and be ordered eastward within the next six months. Then I shall fit out my quarters in cosey style, and as soon as Mamie has finished her

next year at Madame's she shall come and keep house for me and turn the heads of the youngsters. Yet I do not want her to marry in the army, any more than I want you to enter it. Think of it, Malcolm, for twenty-five years now have I followed the standard, and if anything were to take me away what have I to leave you and May? Little or nothing. Even if you were to turn over your modest share to her, as you so gayly spoke of doing, and enlisting in hopes of winning a commission, she would not have more than enough to keep her from want; though so long as your aunt Eleanor lives she will never be in need of a home. Ah, well, God spare me a little longer! I so pray to live to see you both happily settled before I am called hence.

"After our talk I cannot but hope that you will see how little there is to look forward to in the career of a soldier in our service,—in peace times, of course. But if the longing prove too great I will not stand in your way. The life has its attractions. You will never have stancher or truer friends than those who wear the blue. But it has its trials and perils outside of those encountered in the field. I told you of the case of young Mr. Hearn, as fine a soldier as there is in the regiment to-day, yet he was well-nigh ruined through having fallen into the hands of the Jews when young and inexperienced. Wasn't it luck that I should have known of the previous rascality of that clerk, and so was able to make him come to terms? Here is his duplicate receipt in full, filed carefully away among my papers. It was the means of saving a capital officer, too.

"Your letters bring constant joy to me, my son. If it had but pleased God to spare your dear mother, I know well how proud and happy a woman she would have been in her great boy and bonny daughter; but His will be done. I may not write again before leaving for San Carlos, but my blessing goes with every line of this. There is such comfort in the frankness with which you told me of those college debts. Trust me fully; confide in me in any trouble, my son; no man can ever be more devotedly your friend than I,—your father. The draft I sent will doubtless have removed all care and anxiety and left you a little sum to the fore. Spend it as you please, yet 'do not dull thy palm with entertainment of each new-hatched, unfledged comrade.' What words of wisdom spoke that fond old fool! but he loved his boy as I love mine.

"Good-night, my lad.

"This above all, to thine own self be true;
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

"Your father,
"R. F. RAWLINS."

For a moment after Thorp's deep voice had ceased its task, the silence in the heated room was broken only by some half-stifled sigh. Corporal Brent had covered his pale face with his hands. Mrs. Lane was weeping silently. Hearn's eyes, swimming, were turned towards Georgia Marshall, who was bending over her friend, quietly fanning her. The effect of this letter was not unexpected: she had heard every word before.

It was Grace who spoke at last, after no little preparatory clearing of his throat:

"And have you other letters from Captain Rawlins?"

"Many, sir, but this was the last," was the almost tremulous answer: "he was killed within the week that followed."

"And you are——?"

"Malcolm Brent Rawlins, his son."

XVII.

The court had finished its labors and gone. The correspondents had gone, but presumably only to renewed labors. The various journals throughout the Northwest that had so confidently predicted the summary dismissal of the offending lieutenant were now in a somewhat difficult position. They had started in to prove the officer a blackguard and the private a martyr; the result was exactly the opposite, and the problem was now how to get out of the pickle. To the average man, soldier or civilian, the consciousness of having publicly wronged a fellow-being would have proved a source of distress so deep that nothing short of retraction as public and apology as far-reaching as the affront would satisfy the offender. But, in its Jove-like attitude as censor of the morals and manners of the people, the press has no such qualms of conscience. As one eminent journalist expressed it, "Of course we are sorry we were misled, somewhat, but we can't take back what has been said: that injures the paper." And of course as between injuring the paper and injuring the man it is the man who must suffer. Another gifted editor, in whose eyes no benefit was quite

to be compared with free advertising, expressed himself as considering that "That young fellow really ought to feel very much obliged to us; nine-tenths of the people might never have heard of him at all if it hadn't been for this." And he spoke in all seriousness.

Of course the correspondents themselves had long since seen the inevitable results, and had duly prepared their respective papers for the crash. Some of these journals promptly dropped the matter at once and for all, as no longer worthy of attention; others transferred their assaults from the array of lieutenants to the array of courts-martial. Others still, too deeply committed to extricate themselves, threw open their columns to any damaging story affecting the army which their correspondents could fabricate; and those papers which made any reference to the facts elicited before the court did so in the smallest type, but head-lined the item in sarcastic or explosive big capitals. The *Palladium*, or rather its editorial head, when explaining matters to a knot of men at the club, quietly justified the course of his paper by saying, "We did not send Mr. Abrams there at all; he had gone to Central City on some personal business of his own, to look into some property, and while there this Mr. Schönberg, a wealthy, prominent, and, as we supposed, reputable business-man, told him about the offensive manners of the officers to the people, and offered to prove that they would be insulted and ostracized if they ventured to visit the garrison; and Abrams got warmed up and telegraphed to the managing editor that he was 'on to a good thing,' and so we wired him to go ahead." But a junior member of the editorial staff frankly admitted that he, in common with other journalists, had for sixteen years been "laying" for a chance, as he expressed it, to get in a good whack at the young West-Pointer, and here they thought they had it.

Meantime, the record had gone to department head-quarters for the action of the general commanding, and Lawler went with it to fight the case to the last. There was not a soul at Ryan that did not know that, though the lips of the court were sealed, the finding had been "not guilty" on every possible specification. All Lawler could hope to do now was to persuade the general to pick the proceedings to pieces and rasp the court in his review of the case; but even this proved futile. The general, it seemed, would do nothing of the kind; it was even hinted that he rasped Lawler for the very one-sided investigation that he made at the outset.

For two days following the adjournment of the court Fort Ryan

was fairly in a ferment. Schönberg, terrified by the jeers of his townspeople to the belief that he was to be prosecuted for perjury, had slid away on a night train,—"gone to purchase goods in St. Louis," said his unhappy spouse. Welsh, the martyr, had essayed to desert the same night, and, as a cat plays with a mouse, old Kenyon had let him go until the intent was made plain by his boarding the eastward-bound train in civilian dress, and then had had him hauled off by two stalwart infantrymen and, incidentally, by the nape of his neck, and once more Welsh was remanded to his familiar haunt,—the guard-house at Ryan. This time a still more serious charge was hanging over his head,—that of assaulting a non-commissioned officer in discharge of his duty; for Corporal Brent had recognized him as his assailant the instant he heard his voice. So had another witness. It was Georgia Marshall who turned to Kenyon the moment Welsh had finished his testimony, and said, "I have heard that man speak before," and who unhesitatingly declared after Goss appeared that, though by sight she could identify neither man, by voice she knew that the one who had assaulted the corporal of the guard that night was not Goss, but Welsh. Then Welsh himself broke down. Such was the feeling against him among the men, such were the threats which he could not but hear as he lay in his barred cell, that he begged to be allowed to see the commanding officer. He was in fear for his life,—poor devil! and indeed nothing but the discipline so derided of the newspapers saved him from the tarring and feathering and riding on a rail that the soldiers were wild to give him. In piteous accents he implored Kenyon to have him sent away, even to prison at Leavenworth. He would plead guilty to desertion, guilty to theft, guilty to assault, guilty to anything, if the major would only get him away from the terrible scowls and curses of his erstwhile companions. Only, if the major would but believe him, he really had never struck the corporal at all; he had hurled the pepper in his eyes and run. Brent, blinded and raging, had rushed in pursuit, and had struck his head against the sharp edge of the brick pillar at the south end of the troop-barracks. Very possibly this was true; for the gash was deep and jagged.

And Brent was convalescing rapidly, but, between the ladies of the Lane, Brodie, Cross, and Graves households, stood in danger of being killed with kindness. There was just the least little spark of jealousy among the women of the infantry because it was to a comparative stranger that he should have revealed his identity and by her be brought

to the front at so supreme a moment. But it was Miss Marshall who had been greatly interested in his case from the very night of his mishap, and she and Mrs. Lane had been most kind and assiduous in their attentions to him during his days of suffering. When he learned of the charges against Lieutenant Hearn and of the outrageous falsification of the Jew, Schönberg, his determination to conceal his name was at last overcome, and to Miss Marshall and to Dr. Ingersoll he told his story. His father's sudden and lamentable death at the hands of the Apaches had left him no alternative but to make over to his sister every cent that had been hoarded up and set aside for his education,—every cent that was his by the old soldier's will,—and then, leaving with her the little box that contained the captain's papers and letters, and quitting college, he went to New York and enlisted, choosing the infantry service rather than the cavalry because his father's old friends and associates were mainly in the latter, and, though he had seen none of them since his boyhood days, he thought recognition not impossible, and he determined to make his own way and owe nothing to any man.

"I'm glad he came to us," said old Kenyon. "I'd do pretty much anything to see him in any other profession; but, as he is bound to be a soldier, I'll do all I can to place 'Candidate' alongside his name on our muster-roll, and then it would be just my luck to find him commissioned in the cavalry."

But if there was excitement at Ryan, just fancy the feelings of the officers and men in the Eleventh, now two hundred miles away in the Indian Territory, when the letters came detailing the events of the last day of that court-martial,—Schönberg's exposure, Brent's unveiling, Welsh's disgrace, Hearn's undoubted acquittal, Lawler put to confusion and flight, and Georgia Marshall the heroine of the whole thing!

"A Daniel come to judgment, ay, a Daniel," quoth Martin, as Lane read aloud Mabel's enthusiastic description of what she termed the "trial scene." "The whole regiment sends heart-felt congratulations to Hearn and love to Portia," was the telegram that came flashing back to Mrs. Lane. Morris lost no time in dictating a diplomatic message to his absent subaltern, expressive of his desire to welcome him back to duty after so complete a vindication. But Morris felt very ill at ease, and was not surprised that no answer was vouchsafed. He retired to his tent, and was not seen for some hours after learning of Brent's identity.

Meantime, just when one would suppose that all was plain sailing, *balmy breezes*, sun-kissed wavelets, etc., just when nothing should have

stood in the way of Mr. Hearn's rejoicing with all his heart, and just when the course of his true love ought to have been smooth and sweet, the very imp of perversity seemed to have suddenly developed in Georgia Marshall's breast, and she who had done so much to clear his name of "the clouds that lowered o'er" it, and had for two weeks been the young soldier's most valued friend and ally, now most unaccountably held aloof and fairly shunned his society. She met him only in a crowd. She simply would not meet him alone. On one pretext or another she avoided him, and poor Hearn, wounded, utterly unable to account for this sudden change, utterly incapable of fathoming a woman's whim, was now plunged in the depths of a distress exceeding that from which he had just emerged. She had rescued him from the toils only to plunge him into worse entanglement.

It was the fourth day after the adjournment of the court when Major Kenyon came to Mr. Hearn's rooms with a telegram just received from division head-quarters, and found that young gentleman dejectedly reading a long letter in the handwriting of Judge Hearn, his father. Kenyon had grown to know it well. "Released from arrest, lad! That means you can go and join the regiment as soon as you like. What does the judge say now?"

"Read that page," was the answer, as Hearn placed the letter in the major's hand. And with knitted brows Kenyon read as follows:

"And now again I urge upon you, my son, the step I so earnestly counselled in my last. Major Kenyon's telegram just received says that your acquittal is assured and that your vindication is triumphant. This I felt would be the case. But what reparation have you for the wrongs and insults heaped upon you by the Northern press? What proportion of the people who have had you portrayed to them as a low bully, a drunken brute, and a swindler will ever know the contrary? What paper that has vilified you will have the decency or the courage, now that it knows the truth, to make the faintest amends? Not one.

"The time has come for you now to quit at once and for all a profession which the people of the North so little appreciate and so persistently decry. I am aging fast, and shall be glad to have your strong arm to lean upon. A year or two in my office will fit you for the bar. Meantime, you can have nearly double the income that the government pays you, and when I am gone all I have, practically, will be yours. Come back to us, my boy; come to the mother, the father, and the

people who love you; come home to us who know and need you: you are not wanted where you are."

For some time Major Kenyon stood in silence. At last, seeing that he was expected to express his opinion, he slowly spoke:

"I feared that that first letter would come, and I might have known that this would follow. When will you answer?"

"Not just yet. I must think it over. Not—not until after to-night, anyway."

That evening Mrs. Morris insisted upon everybody's coming to her house "to celebrate." The news that Hearn had been released by telegraphic orders was all over the post in half an hour, and that he would start to rejoin the regiment in the field was of course a foregone conclusion. Only, said that all-important personage referred to generally as "everybody,"—only he will probably want to delay a little while on Miss Marshall's account, for if they are not already engaged it is solely her fault; any one can see he is utterly in love with her.

Once in a while "everybody" makes a mistake. This time "everybody" was practically right. No one more thoroughly than Hearn himself knew how utterly he was in love with Georgia Marshall, and nobody but Kenyon knew that, yielding to the plea in his father's letter, Hearn might not return to the regiment at all.

It was a joyous gathering at the Morrises'; and yet there had been a singular conversation at the Lanes' before Mabel could induce her friend to go at all.

"Mr. Hearn will certainly come and ask to be your escort," said Mabel, the moment Mrs. Morris was gone. "How can you say no?"

"He will ask you, Mabel, as I shall not be visible, and you must accept. If you will walk over there and back with Mr. Hearn, I will go; otherwise I shall have a splitting headache and be confined to my room."

"How utterly absurd, Portia! Everybody expects him to escort you. No other man in this post will ask you so long as he is here: it is a foregone conclusion that Mr. Hearn will."

"That is why I want you to go with him. If I go it will be with Major Kenyon." And then Miss Marshall took the flushed, perplexed, but lovely face of her hostess between her slender hands and kissed it. "Mabel, I must not go with Mr. Hearn. Some day I'll tell you why." *And then she* ran to her room.

"Tell me, indeed! I know too well," was the almost tearful nswer. "You are prouder, far prouder, than I ever was."

And so, though she gained her point for the time-being, though Hearn had to offer his services to Mrs. Lane when he called and could ot see Miss Marshall, though Mabel went on that moody young gen-leman's arm and Miss Marshall followed with her stanch friend the ajor,—Hearn raging with jealous pain the while,—the time came hen she found her precaution all of no avail. Mr. Hearn was too uch in earnest, too deeply in love, to be longer held at bay.

"Mrs. Lane," he stammered at last, as they were walking home-ard late at night, "I must speak to Miss Marshall. Surely you know hy. Have I not your good wishes? Will you not help me?"

How could Mabel Lane refuse? Once the gate was reached she ade both men come in, though Miss Marshall would have dismissed he major; and then, slipping from the parlor along the hall-way to he dining-room, she left Miss Marshall to entertain her guests, while ith nervous hands she set forth wine, and then presently called Kenyon, as though to her aid. He came instantly, and Miss Marshall ould have followed. But Hearn was too quick, and sprang before her o the door-way. For three—four minutes, nervously, incoherently, Mrs. Lane strove to keep up a laughing chat with the bulky major; ut he, too, saw the ruse as he sipped his wine, and neither was prac-ised in the art of dissembling. Suddenly Hearn's footsteps, quick nd firm, were heard in the hall-way; the front door closed with udden bang, and, without a word to his hostess, he was gone. Mrs. ane's heart sank within her. Conversation was at an end. Kenyon tood for an instant in awkward silence. Then Miss Marshall's skirts ere heard as she fairly rushed up the stairs, and the major took him-elf off as quickly as a clumsy man could effect an escape. An instant fter, Mabel Lane stood at Georgia's door. It was closed.

"Portia," she called, in low, pleading tones,—"Portia, mayn't I ome in?"

For a moment, no answer at all.

"Georgia, dear, *do* speak to me."

At last a quick, impetuous step; the door was thrown open. All as darkness; but as Mrs. Lane entered with outstretched arms, there ame a low, almost wailing voice from the bedside:

"Oh, Mabel, Mabel, how could you?"

XVIII.

When it was generally understood around Fort Ryan the follow afternoon that Mr. Hearn had taken the first train and gone after regiment early that morning, people were somewhat surprised. Al toward sunset the ladies began to think it time somebody went to at the Lanes' and see why it was that neither Mrs. Lane nor M Marshall had been abroad during the day. Incidentally, too, it mi be possible to find out whether congratulations were in order. Nob could account for the sudden departure of the lieutenant. Ken knew of it, of course, but to all questions would only reply, as thou in surprise,—

"Go? Why, of course he went! What else would you exp of a man like Hearn? He was all ready to join his regiment: w shouldn't he go?"

Still, as Mr. Hearn had not said a word about going even w questioned the night before, every woman at Ryan felt sure there some sudden reason, and equally sure that Miss Marshall, if she o would, could tell it. Very probably the first callers fully expected be told that Miss Marshall was not well and begged to be excu That would have settled the matter to their entire satisfaction. I on the contrary, Miss Marshall, looking every bit as fresh and cool animated as ever, came tripping lightly down the stairs the mon they were announced. She perfectly well knew that they would coming, and was fully prepared to meet them. She had heard, too Mr. Hearn's sudden departure: a brief note had come to Mrs. L early in the morning, over which that bonny matron had had a g cry. The visitors only succeeded in finding Miss Marshall as brilli and entertaining as ever, but more provokingly inscrutable. It impossible to determine from her manner in speaking of Mr. He and his departure whether there was an engagement or not.

Nor was any one a whit wiser at the end of the week. "If sh engaged to him," said the dames and damsels, "she is receiving rat too much attention from the major, who lets no day go by withou call, and the calls are growing longer."

Mabel Lane, who had looked pale for a day or two, was bl and sunshiny as ever, so far as Ryan society could judge; and in *absence of* any local sensation some people were disposed to reg

the situation as decidedly disheartening. No woman rests content who suspects an engagement and cannot prove it.

Letters from the regiment gave no clue. Lane wrote to Mabel every day,—another thing that made him culpable in the eyes of lords less uxorious,—and she was besieged by the other wives with questions as to what was going on in the field. But what he wrote her of Hearn she would tell no one, not even Georgia,—who never asked.

"It has been a hard ordeal for Hearn, as any one can see," wrote the captain. "He has aged and changed greatly. The youngsters had planned a sort of love-feast for him, but he begged them that nothing of the kind be held, and he has really shunned society since rejoining. He claims that all his time is taken up with his troop, and of course we are very busy; but there is something behind it, and I think you know."

She did know, and yet could not tell. It was her penance for breaking faith with Georgia. The latter had forbidden that she should tell to any one the fact that Mr. Hearn had indeed offered himself and had been refused.

But Lane learned it soon enough. From the moment of his return to the regiment the young soldier spent most of his time, when off duty, in the society of the captain, and one night in the fulness of his sorrowing heart he told his friend of the bitter disappointment that had come to him. He loved her deeply, had asked her to be his wife, and she had gently, even tearfully, but positively, said no, it simply could not be. He had begged her to give her reasons, and she refused. She assured him of her faith, respect, and esteem, but pointed out to him that in every way possible since the trial she had striven to avert the declaration which she frankly confessed she could not but foresee. He was forced to admit this, and could no longer press her for reasons, since she had plainly discouraged his suit. Yet it was hard,—very hard.

Lane simply could not understand. "Is there any one else?" he wrote to Mabel, and Mabel said she was sure there was not; but she was equally sure Georgia meant no. Mabel, herself, was even more perplexed than the captain, since Georgia had gently but resolutely forbidden any further mention of the subject between them. And now, with the utter inconsistency of her sex, pretty Mrs. Lane was all eagerness to discover and demolish the barrier to a match which a month ago she would have opposed because it seemed inevitable.

Then came a joy in which Mrs. Lane for the time-being forgot her perplexities. Captain Fred obtained a seven days' leave from the regiment and flew as straight to her arms as a circuitous railroad-route could carry him. He greeted Miss Marshall as cordially as ever, but he did not call her Portia as he had intended, because Mabel warned him in a letter that it served to revive associations which were not all joyous. "I called her Portia long before she met Mr. Hearn," was Lane's stout reply; "but if she doesn't like it, that's enough." Major Kenyon was bidden to dinner the evening of his home-coming, and of course many of the garrison people happened in, and so there was nothing but general chat. But two evenings later, when the major was sitting in the big arm-chair and discoursing on some of his favorite hobbies, he broached anew the matter of Judge Hearn's letter urging his son to quit the service.

"Have you never heard Hearn's answer, major?" said Lane. "He read it to me before sending it, and I thought it so good that I kept a copy. Here it is."

Miss Marshall was sitting at the table under the bright lamp as Lane began to read. Mabel noticed that she leaned forward, shading her eyes with her hand.

"I have thought it all over, my dear father. The offer you make me is one for which I thank you with all my heart. Few men could quit the service under better auspices, or return to a home more loved or friends more loving; and yet—I cannot. Ten years of my life, perhaps the best ten, have been spent in a profession which with every year presents new fields, new studies, and new requirements. I have worked honestly, have won friends, and, in all modesty may say, a good name. Admitting all you write of this recent attempt of the papers to blacken it, my friends here tell me that it but proves the strength of my record that even concerted newspaper assaults could not harm me in the eyes of right-thinking people.

"I love the duties. I am deeply attached to many of my comrades. I can be a very fair soldier, and might only make a very poor lawyer. For these reasons I think I ought to stand where I am. But there is still another reason.

"Father, when I bound myself to the United States as a cadet I received at the hands of the nation a schooling such as I could get at no other institution in the world, and was moulded by the nation for *its service.* If in after-years I found myself better fitted to serve in

ome other way, then there might be excuse for tendering a resignation. But when I feel and know that I am far more soldier than I can ever e anything else, it all the more convinces me that my efforts belong ow and for a lifetime to the nation that trained me and that I have worn to serve.

"The dear ones at home know me best, it is true. The class in hose supposed interests I have been so unjustly assailed, it is also true, s very different from that in which we move. But, in the broad light f a soldier's duty, neither the love of the one nor the unreasoning ate of the other should swerve me. The hardest knocks a soldier has o bear come sometimes from the very men whom he is sworn to defend. You would not have me yield because of a stinging wound or two, nor would I be worthy of your name if I faltered now. It is my belief hat, despite apparent apathy, there is still, North or South, a place in he hearts of the people for every soldier who seeks faithfully to serve hem, and in that faith—God helping me—*I shall follow the old flag o the end.*"

"By Jupiter!" said Kenyon, as he sprang to his feet and strode xcitedly up and down the room, "isn't that enough to make one lamn the liberty of the press, to think that a month ago it was holding p that fine fellow for everything that was low and contemptible!—Miss Marshall, if I were—— Why, she's gone!"

"Just stepped into the dining-room a moment," said Mrs. Lane, romptly, though her eyes were brimming. "Now, isn't that Mr. Hearn all over!"

But Georgia Marshall had not gone into the dining-room. Mabel ound her over at the end of the veranda, gazing at the distant night-ights across the dark and silent valley.

September came, and the Eleventh would soon be on its home-ward march. Letters to the regiment made frequent mention of old Kenyon's devotion to Miss Marshall, and even Hearn had to hear occa-ional bits of conversation that told him that in quitting Ryan he had bandoned the field to a rival. But when orders reached them there was other news: Miss Marshall was to return to the East at once. "Despite every plea," wrote Mabel, "she persists in it, and adamant s no more yielding than is her determination. I am utterly heart-roken, but cannot prevent it. She has been making arrangements for new position of some kind for the last six weeks, and she will leave efore the regiment gets back."

And when the Eleventh came marching into Ryan late in the month, and a host of tanned and bearded troopers rode in behind the band on its dancing grays, Georgia Marshall had vanished from the scene.

Presently Kenyon took a long leave and disappeared. "Having it out with his newspaper friends in Chicago," was Martin's suggestion. But the next thing heard of him he had turned up in Cincinnati, and Mabel knew well what that meant, and waited with bated breath. For a month there came no further news, and then he was reported at St. Augustine, more crabbed than ever.

"Then he, too, has been rejected," said Mabel. And she was right. Kenyon did not rejoin until long after the Christmas holidays.

Old Blauvelt, by this time, had been sent before a retiring board, which recommended him for permanent shelving, and he was still on leave until the needed vacancy should occur. Hearn, meantime, remained in command of his troop, no longer encumbered by the presence of Trooper Welsh, who had been formally "sent to Leavenworth." Corporal Brent had won his sergeant's chevrons, and was looking forward to examination for promotion. Everything was going blithely at the post, but for the sadness that seemed to have clouded one young soldier's life, and for the anxious look on Mabel Lane's face when Portia was asked for, as Portia often was. "Teaching children all the fall and winter was telling on her," wrote an old school-friend. And when April came she was reported ill, though her own letters made no mention of it. The family would move to their country-seat in a week, and she would be so glad, she said, to see the trees and birds again.

The first of May had come. The lovely suburbs of a bustling city were shrouded in the richest, freshest green. The sweet breath of the early summer, laden with the perfume of lilac and honeysuckle and of myriad blossoms, was sighing through the foliage of a park of grand old trees and rippling the surface of a grassy lawn. Robin and bluebird, oriole and crested woodpecker, flashed and flitted through the sunshine, now splashing in the basin of the fountain, now chasing each other in chattering glee through the slanting light and shadow. The drone of beetle and hum of dragon-fly fell soothingly on the drowsy ear. The little knot of Jerseys browsing in the paddock down the

eastward slope huddled together sleepily in a shaded corner. The tennis-court was deserted, the mallets lay sprawled about the croquet-ground, and a pair of Maltese kittens that had been scampering about, playing hide-and-seek among the currant-bushes, seemed at last overcome by the languorous spell in which all nature was hushed, and with the confidence of kittenhood proceeded to clamber into the slowly-swinging hammock, hung well back in the shade, wherein was reclining the one human being visible in the entire picture,—a tall girl with big dark eyes and a wealth of sombre braids of hair,—a girl whose soft cheeks were almost as thin and pale as the slender white hands loosely clasping an open letter that lay in her lap. And it was this that the foremost pussy, after clambering by swift springs up the pathway afforded by the trailing white skirts, now impatiently pawed to one side and curled herself up in its place; there she was promptly joined by her playmate. Slowly the thin white hand was lifted and gently stroked the fur of the pretty, graceful creature.

"It is a holiday for us, isn't it, Fluffykin?" murmured the girl. "The children and doggy both gone, and it's almost time for us to be thinking of tea,—tea all alone. There's the whistle of the sunset train now."

For a moment the wooded slopes on both sides of the valley echoed to the rattle of the incoming cars, the sharp hiss of steam, the distant sound of voices at the little station down the winding village street, arched over with rustling foliage. Then the clang of the bell, and the hurrying engine again pushed northward, impatient of delay. A few light carriages and pony-phaetons came driving swiftly by; a few of the occupants waved hand or handkerchief to the reclining figure in the hammock, but far more passed by on the other side without a sign or token, and presently silence and solitude again settled down upon the shaded lawn, and the last rays of the westering sun kissed the tree-tops good-night and slowly died away.

"Surely there should be another letter from Mabel to-night: this one is a week old now," said Portia. But, old as it was, there seemed one page which deserved re-reading, and the white hands sought and found the letter and lifted it before her eyes:

"Mr. Hearn has been gone a week now, and we miss him sadly. He had almost made his home here with us during the winter, and rarely spent an evening anywhere else. His father's death seems to have been very sudden, and it was a great shock. He has a month's

leave, with permission to apply for an extension. Georgia,—Portia,—I could say so much, so very much, if you would only listen. If you would only release me from that promise! I was thinking but yesterday how I blessed the day that my pride broke down and gave me Fred and happiness. Sometimes I cannot but think that only pride—foolish, unwarrantable pride—stands between you and a life as blessed as my own."

Impatiently the letter was hurled upon the grass, and, half turning, Georgia buried her wan face on her arm. Of what was she thinking? Surely those were hot tears trickling through the long white fingers; surely there was little evidence of stubborn pride in the abandonment of that silent, lonely sorrow. All day she had been at leisure, the family and children away in town, and, though neither her duties had been very onerous nor the trials of her new position very great, she had drooped all winter long. This was the first real day of rest; yet, with all its sweetness and sunshine, had it not been full of tears?—full of vague unrest and longing? and now even the sunshine was going, and the gloaming was slowly settling down upon the valley. Far over the eastern heights the silvery shield of the soft May moon was peeping into view; but the fairy shafts of her gentle light could not yet penetrate the gathering gloom here in the grove where swung the hammock. Still the hot tears came trickling between the white fingers, and, yielding at last to the mournful influence of the dying day, Georgia Marshall wept unrestrainedly,—wept while great sobs shook her frame; and while one fluffy kitten, disturbed in her intended nap, stretched forth a furry paw and lifted up a querulous note of remonstrance, her companion, suddenly dislodged from her cosey nest in Georgia's lap, clawed vigorously back upon the heaving folds of the summer fabric, glared around in excited search for the possible cause of such seismatic disturbance, and instantly set back a pair of tiny ears, arched a furry back, bristled her stiffening tail, and gave vent to spiteful challenge at the fell disturber of her peace. There stood a man.

A tall young fellow, erect and powerful in build, clad in civilian garb, but striding across the lawn with the swing of a trooper, halted suddenly not ten feet away and lifted from his shapely head a hat banded heavily with crape. The next instant he had hurled this aside, stepped quickly forward, utterly ignoring pussy's hostile guise, had *thrown* himself on one knee beside the hammock, and the drooping *moustache almost* swept the soft, white hands as he impetuously seized *them.*

"Georgia," he whispered.

Heavens! what a start! In her wild consternation she recoiled from his touch, striving at the same instant to sit erect. Hammocks are not made for combinations so eccentric. The next instant the flimsy thing had slipped from under her, and she felt herself going. Drowning men catch at straws; drowning women seize the hand they would have shunned. But for his sudden spring, but for prompt clasping arms, she would have gone headlong to the ground on the opposite side. For a minute she was held in close embrace, a confused mingling of dusky braids, of throbbing femininity, of hotly-blushing, tear-wet face, of cool linen lawn and clinging hammock-netting. Then her hands regained their cunning, and found his broad shoulders, and she pushed herself free, and then hysterical laughter came to her aid, and the shaded grove rang to a peal that, if not merry, was at least irresistible, and at last, as she sat there, restored to equilibrium and striving to regain her whirling senses, as he stood patiently bending over her, half praying that the inspired hammock might yet attempt some new freak, she glanced up at him through smiles and tears and disordered bangs, only to say,—

"How utterly absurd!"

To which philosophical remark he vouchsafed no reply whatever.

It is a full minute before she recovers, even partially, either breath or self-possession. Then she holds forth her hand, and he assists her to rise.

"This is not the welcome I should give you. Shall we go to the house?"

But even as she asks and her eyes glance nervously, shyly, up into his face, she knows he will accept no invitation that will peril this *tête-à-tête*. She sees how the lines have deepened in his frank, soldierly face, and that a sadness not all of his recent bereavement has left its traces there. She would lead him from the shaded grove to the parlor, where the lamps are already beginning to twinkle, but he will not budge one step. He stands confronting her.

"No! I have come solely to see you. Is there any reason why we cannot stay here a moment?" And she can think of none. Oh, what infamous fate that he should have found her weeping,—bathed in tears!

"I hardly thought to see you at all, especially after—the great

—sorrow of your father's death," she falters, her heart leaping and bounding, despite her effort to be calm.

"I am taking mother North," he answers, simply. "It was a cruel blow to her and a hard one to me. It was all over before I could get home. Mother will spend the summer with her sister on the St. Lawrence, but she has to rest in Cincinnati until to-morrow night. I left her with old friends this afternoon and came out here to find you. I must go back this evening. And, now, have you no word of welcome for me? Did you not know that I would come, loving you as I do?"

What answer can she make? Her head is drooping low; her hands are clasped together, her bosom heaving, her breath fluttering away; and yet how wild a joy, how exquisite a hope, is throbbing in her heart of hearts!

"Georgia," he speaks impulsively, his deep voice trembling, "you made me accept your answer then and bear my bitter disappointment without a word; but I have borne it too long now. Had you been at the other end of the world I must have followed you, for the longing to see your dear face, to hear your voice, to look into your glorious eyes, has overmastered me time and again. I had to come, and now I will hear what it is that stands between us. God knows my love and honor have been yours a long, long year. God knows there can be no content or joy for me if your answer be final. You have bound my life in yours. You won my whole heart, my deepest gratitude. No, you cannot check me by impatient gesture now: you must hear. You told me there was no other man. Is that true?"

"Perfectly," she answers, proudly.

"And yet you would not listen to me. You would not be my wife."

"You forget, it was just after the trial. You seemed to think you owed me such a world of gratitude; and—do not men sometimes mistake gratitude for love?"

"Oh, heaven!" he interrupts her impetuously, his hands outstretched. "You do not mean you doubted me, Georgia? If that were your reason, is it not banished now? Look—look up into my eyes, my darling, and tell me, if you dare, that it is gratitude, not deep and fervent love, I offer you. Nay, you shall see." And, before she can retreat, his strong, trembling hands have seized her drooping head, and between them her face, with its dark, lustrous, swimming

yes, with cheeks still tear-wet, yet burning with blushes chasing each ther to her very brows; her soft red lips quivering and trembling at he dimpled corners,—all—all now lifted to his worshipping gaze; and he can repel no longer. One swift glance, and, if ever vestige of loubt remained, it vanished then and there. No woman on earth could ıave looked into his eyes and denied the love that burned within them, —all her own, all her own.

"Speak to me, Georgia. Do you believe me now?"

"Yes," she whispers, and her face would have hidden itself but for hose strong hands again.

"And you have no love to give in return?"

A little silvery beam is peeping through the foliage now. The ittens, forgotten, are rolling over each other in mad frolic at their ery feet. The last chirp of drowsing bird has died away. The ilence of the sweet summer night has fallen on all surrounding nature, et he can hardly hear her whisper,—

"You never asked it—until now."

"But it *is* mine, really? Georgia, tell me," he implores.

"It has been—all yours ever since the night I heard your letter,— ver since you wrote that you would follow the old flag to the end."

THE END.

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